

NEWSLETTER

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In Brief

THE CREATION OF PACCO – BETWEEN NECESSARY MEASURES AND MAJOR RISKS

The [draft law](#) providing for the dissolution of specialized prosecution offices—the Prosecutor’s Office for Combating Organized Crime and Special Cases (PCCOCS) and the Anticorruption Prosecutor’s Office (APO)—and the establishment of a new structure, the Anticorruption and Organized Crime Prosecutor’s Office (PACCO), was registered on February 12, 2025. This initiative follows the Ministry of Justice’s proposals to strengthen anti-corruption institutions, in line with the recommendations of the Supreme Security Council (see details in [Newsletter No. 77](#)).

PACCO will take over the mandate and serve as the legal successor of PCCOCS and APO. It will be headed by a Chief Prosecutor, who will have at least one deputy, and will be responsible for combating high-level corruption, organized crime, terrorism, and torture. The draft law establishes a performance evaluation mechanism for the PACCO Chief Prosecutor, similar to that applied to the Prosecutor General (see details in [Newsletter No. 36](#)).

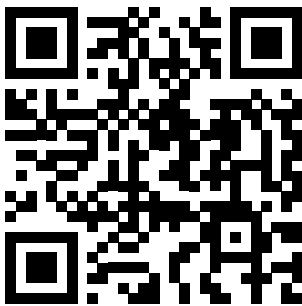
PACCO will be established upon the publication of the adopted law. Within 10 days, the Prosecutor General will appoint an interim Chief Prosecutor, who will be approved by the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP). PCCOCS and APO will cease their activities 30 days after the law enters into force. This means that, during this transitional period, there will be three specialized prosecution offices with overlapping responsibilities.

Within the same 10-day period, the SCP will initiate the selection process for the position of Chief Prosecutor and the remaining prosecutor positions within PACCO. The top two candidates for the leadership role will be subject to [vetting](#) as a priority, and if they pass, the winning candidate will be appointed. As an exception to the general legal provisions, enforcement prosecutors will be appointed immediately upon winning the competition, with the vetting process to follow thereafter. Prosecutors from the dissolved structures will be eligible to apply for the new positions. PACCO prosecutors will benefit from a salary increase, with the reference value rising from 2,850 to 3,000 MDL. Ongoing cases will be transferred within 30 days of the interim Chief Prosecutor’s appointment.

Prosecutors from the dissolved offices will be reassigned, without competition, to vacant positions in territorial prosecution offices, except for leadership roles. Support and technical staff, including seconded



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The proposal to dissolve specialized prosecution offices and establish a single entity has faced criticism and concerns from legal professionals.

personnel, will be transferred to the new prosecution office. Before the interim Chief Prosecutor is appointed (within 10 days of the law's publication), the Government must allocate a headquarters for PACCO, secure the necessary financial resources for equipment and other technical needs, and amend the state budget law to cover additional expenses.

On February 19, 2025, the [first public consultations](#) on the draft law were held, followed by its approval in the [first reading](#) on the following day. [Additional consultations](#) were held on February 28, 2025. Public institutions and civil society raised several concerns and risks. One of the main issues highlighted was the complex process of transferring a large number of case files, which could disrupt ongoing investigations. Experts warned that the established deadlines were unrealistic.

On March 4, 2025, the SCP issued a [negative opinion](#) on the draft law, expressing its opposition to the initiative in its current form. Specifically, the proposed transfer of specialized prosecutors to territorial prosecution offices was criticized, as it was viewed as a demotion, which can only be effectuated through a disciplinary procedure. The SCP recommended that PACCO be established through the merger of PCCOCS and APO, with specialized prosecutors being directly transferred to the new entity. This approach would ensure both the continuity of ongoing proceedings and the protection of prosecutors' rights and guarantees.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PROSECUTORS: ACHIEVEMENTS, PLANS, AND OUTSTANDING ISSUES

On February 11, 2025, the [General Assembly of Prosecutors](#) (GAP) convened, with the participation of 542 prosecutors out of 605 in office. The agenda focused on the presentation and approval of the 2024 activity reports of the Prosecutor's Office and the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP), including priorities for 2025, as well as the election of prosecutor members to the SCP's Selection and Evaluation Board and Disciplinary and Ethics Board.

The Prosecutor General, Ion Munteanu, presented the Prosecutor's Office report for the year 2024. According to the [Activity plan](#), which included 50 actions, 36 were completed (72%), 9 actions were partially completed, and 5 actions remained unaccomplished. The Prosecutor's Office operated with a budget exceeding 450 million MDL, of which over 86% was allocated to personnel expenses. Prosecutors led criminal investigations in 38,323 cases and referred 10,855 cases to court. The number of convictions increased, while dismissals and acquittals decreased. Approximately 54% of cases were resolved based on evidence gathered during the investigation phase, while 4% were settled through plea agreements. Courts issued 277 rulings ordering the special confiscation of criminal assets worth approximately 4.3 million EUR.

The President of the SCP, Dumitru Obadă, in presenting the SCP's activity report for 2024, mentioned that 90% of the [planned activities for 2024](#) had been completed.

The GAP highlighted both the progress and challenges of the Prosecutor's Office; however, some issues remained unaddressed. A key outcome of the GAP was the complete renewal of the SCP's specialized boards, which are now fully operational.

The Prosecutor's Inspection became a structure under the SCP with functional autonomy, following amendments to the [Law on the Prosecutor's Office](#), which enabled its full functionality. In this context, five competitions were held to select inspectors for the Inspection of Prosecutors, resulting in the appointment of three inspectors and one chief inspector for a six-year term.

During the GAP, the [priorities of the Prosecutor's Office for 2025](#) were announced. The first priority concerns the reorganization of the prosecutorial system's structure and the improvement of its efficiency, a process initiated in 2024 to align the work of prosecutors' offices with that of the courts and to enhance prosecutorial effectiveness. The second priority is the digitalization of operational processes, the interconnection, and the development of platforms to ensure the efficient use of resources and the expedited resolution of cases. Another priority is the improvement of the status and public perception of prosecutors, aimed at increasing public trust in the system. Additionally, representatives of the Prosecutor's Office have set the objective of strengthening interinstitutional and international cooperation to support European integration, including through the adjustment of prosecutorial legislation and practices to EU standards. The recent initiative to merge specialized prosecution offices was not discussed.

During the GAP, the election procedure for prosecutor members of the specialized colleges of the SCP took place. On [January 3, 2025](#), the SCP announced the list of prosecutors who successfully passed the vetting and were admitted as candidates for election (details available in [Newsletter No. 77](#)). Following the voting process, prosecutors [Mariana Gornea](#) (with 235 votes) and [Corneliu Lavciuc](#) (with 265 votes) were elected to the SCP's Selection and Evaluation Board, while prosecutors [Viorel Beiu](#) (with 304 votes) and [Alexandru Lozan](#) (with 280 votes) were elected to the Disciplinary and Ethics Board.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION: VETTING HEARINGS FOR JUDGES OF THE CHIȘINĂU COURT OF APPEAL GAINED MOMENTUM IN FEBRUARY

In February 2025, the Judicial Vetting Commission (the Commission) conducted [hearings](#) for candidates applying for positions in the specialized colleges of the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM) and initiated the vetting procedure for judges of the Chișinău Court of Appeal. The hearings were held in accordance with the provisions of [Law No. 252/2023](#).

During the partially closed hearing of Judge [Olga Cojocar](#), the Commission inquired about the acquisition and transactions involving certain movable assets by the judge's son between 2019 and 2023. Possible breaches of asset declaration obligations for the years 2019, 2022, and 2023 were also examined. Another aspect of ethical integrity discussed was the judge's involvement in two rulings—[Prodius and Others](#) and [Hohlov and Others](#)—which led to findings of violations of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). These cases concerned the failure to enforce court judgments within a reasonable time and the insufficient

redress of moral damages. Subsequently, [an additional](#) partially closed hearing was held, in which Cojocaru and her son provided clarifications regarding financial contributions to the transactions involving the movable assets.

During the partially closed hearing of Judge [Ion Bulhac](#), the Commission questioned him regarding potential unjustified wealth for the years 2015, 2017, 2020, and 2023, a suspicious loan obtained by his daughter, and discrepancies between the contract price and the market value in the purchase of a vehicle. The judge explained that he regularly withdrew cash to accumulate financial reserves, justifying any uncertainties regarding his expenditure flow. The Commission also raised concerns about his involvement in two rulings—[V.I.](#) and [Trocin](#)—which related to violations of Article 3 of the ECHR and the lack of genuine investigative efforts in the respective cases.

[Denis Băbălău](#) was questioned about the manner in which his father acquired two Skoda Superb vehicles, manufactured in 2014 and 2020, the leasing payments made for the most recently purchased vehicle, as well as the right of use over these automobiles. Additionally, the Commission raised questions regarding his 2021 expenditures, which exceeded the judge's income by 29,000 MDL.

[Silvia Cecan](#) was asked about a possible discrepancy between her income and expenditures, estimated at approximately 690,000 MDL for the period 2016–2022, as well as suspicions regarding non-compliance with the asset and personal interest declaration regime. During the hearing, the Commission also examined issues related to the non-disclosure of usage rights over multiple vehicles and bank accounts belonging to a commercial company established by her former husband, the right of habitation, received donations, and a loan. Furthermore, discussions included expenses related to her daughter's studies abroad.

[Alexandru Spoială](#) was requested to clarify a potential conflict of interest concerning his role as a member of the admission commission at the National Institute of Justice. Other matters, including possible violations of the ECHR, were discussed in a closed session.

[Ala Malii](#) was asked to clarify suspicions regarding a possible unexplained wealth for the years 2012–2016 and 2023, including the source of funds for the purchase of a house and several vehicles, the cash savings, and their non-declaration. The Commission also addressed a potential conflict of interest with insolvency administrator Irina Silvestru, who was mentioned in journalistic investigations regarding illegal property dispossession, in the context of seven cases arising from insolvency proceedings in which Silvestru served as administrator. The judge was also questioned about her involvement in [the Sanduța case](#) concerning the violation of Article 10 of the ECHR, as well as an [article](#) revealing financial ties between a company in Moldova and one in Russia, with direct connections to the former President of the Republic of Moldova, Igor Dodon.

[Diana Ioniță](#) was questioned about financial discrepancies between 2015-2022, including the sources of funds for purchasing an apartment in 2015 and negative balances of 113,000 MDL in 2018 and 13,000 MDL in 2022. Additionally, she was asked about the potential failure to pay taxes, particularly in relation to the sale of

In February 2025, the Vetting Commission conducted hearings for 17 of the 18 judges of the Court of Appeal Center, as well as one candidate for the position of judge at the SCJ.

a non-residential space in 2021 and the failure to pay tax on potential capital gains until April 2022. The Commission also examined her work with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Moldova between 2012-2020, requesting explanations regarding the non-payment of income tax during that period and the funding sources and costs associated with her daughter's studies abroad.

The Commission requested clarifications from judge [Marina Anton](#) regarding possible conflicts of interest with the family of lawyer Svetlana Prodan in relation to information tours, and with prosecutor Roman Starnei, who had cases at the Court of Appeal and had previously been involved in a criminal case with the judge. Additionally, she was asked about a phone conversation with a judge from the first instance regarding a case in which her husband was a party, followed by a decision favorable to him. Furthermore, the Commission examined her involvement in three cases that resulted in violations of the ECHR.

[Oxana Robu](#) was questioned about the sources of funds for the construction of a house in her parents' yard, the use of several vehicles belonging to her ex-husband, and his activities and income. The Commission also examined possible discrepancies in her asset declarations for the periods 2012–2014 and 2016–2017. Additionally, in a closed session, she was heard in relation to her involvement in the [Cosovan case](#).

[Victoria Sîrbu](#) was asked about the [Bîzdîga case](#), where a violation of Article 8 of the ECHR was found. The case involved the restriction of a father's right to visit his son and included speculations regarding domestic violence.

[Marcel Juganari](#) was questioned about a potential conflict of interest related to three cases he adjudicated, in which his brother-in-law was a party, with the family relationship being established in the last case.

[Igor Chiroşca](#) was asked about two potential conflicts of interest concerning two lawyers who represented cases before him, in his capacity as a judge at the Străşeni Court and the Chişinău Court of Appeal, while simultaneously representing his interests in other proceedings.

[Angela Braga](#) was asked about the discrepancy between her income and expenses, resulting in a negative balance of 249,000 MDL during the evaluation period. The Commission also inquired about the discounted purchase of a vehicle in 2021. Additionally, the judge was questioned about the omission of her husband's salary in 2016, her own salary in 2020, and a loan her husband received from a lending company.

The partially closed hearing of [Ruxanda Pulbere](#) focused on analyzing financial flows from 2012-2015 and 2017. The Commission identified several omissions in the asset declarations, such as a 760,000 MDL donation, a 2 million MDL assignment of debt, a gift worth approximately 158,000 MDL (in the form of a tourist voucher), a 90,000 MDL donation from her parents in 2022, and the omission of declaring her role as a founder of a limited liability company in the Russian Federation. The Commission also examined the purchase of a vehicle at an undervalued price by the judge's parents for their daughter. Furthermore, the

judge was asked about the purchase of a newer model Porsche Cayenne in 2019, considering that, on the same day, Pulbere sold an older model of the same brand for exactly the same amount.

[Dorin Dulghieru](#) was heard in a partially closed session and was questioned about the use of six vehicles, purchased through leasing contracts in which his mother was listed as a guarantor. Dulghieru was also asked about the financial capacity of his parents, specifically whether they were able to cover the expenses for these contracts. The value of the vehicles was estimated between 11,000 and 37,000 EUR. The Commission had questions regarding discrepancies between reported income and expenses, which were estimated at approximately 2 million MDL over the evaluated period (10 years), as well as about loan agreements, their repayment, and donations received from close relatives.

[Ana Panov](#) was heard in a partially closed session and questioned about unexplained assets accumulated over two years within the reviewed period. During the session, the judge requested corrections regarding expense calculations for 2015, stating that the savings for that year amounted to 25,000 EUR. Panov also clarified some aspects regarding her financial income and the activities of her husband. The Commission also inquired about the judge's involvement in [certain rulings](#), including those related to the unreasonable delay in executing judicial decisions.

[Angela Bostan](#) was asked about discrepancies between income and expenses for the years 2016, 2018, and 2020. The judge explained that these discrepancies would not have been identified by the Commission had the child maintenance allowance been included in the income figures. The Commission also addressed the subject of the right of residence in an apartment, the owner of which was, in fact, the judge's mother. Bostan was questioned about her involvement in the [Prodius and others case](#). Subsequently, the Commission organized an [additional hearing](#), during which some aspects concerning the maintenance allowance for her son were clarified.

[Grigore Daşchevici](#) was questioned about the accumulation of assets during the periods 2012-2014, 2016-2019, and 2023, the de facto ownership of an apartment, and the right to use two vehicles owned by his brother. He was also asked about declarations regarding cash savings. The Commission examined the donations received by both him and his wife, as well as the purchase of a commercial building used for his wife's business activities. Additionally, the Commission reviewed a potential undeclared conflict of interest and his involvement in three cases heard by the ECHR: [Svernei, Gîrbu and others](#), and [Luca](#).

PARLIAMENT EXPANDS THE COMPETENCIES OF THE NATIONAL INTEGRITY AUTHORITY

On February 27, 2025, Parliament [adopted](#) the final reading of legislative amendments aimed at strengthening the mechanisms for the declaration and verification of assets and personal interests. One of the key changes pertains to the Civil Procedure Code (Art. 278/1), which will enable the National Integrity Authority (NIA) to directly request the confiscation of assets in cases where acts

NIA will be able to directly request the confiscation of unjustified assets, without being required to initiate a new court procedure.

issued by integrity inspectors are challenged. This change eliminates the need to initiate separate judicial proceedings when the individual contests the finding. In at least three previous cases (outlined in [Newsletter No. 48](#)) courts had required NIA to initiate new proceedings for asset confiscation, even after the legality of the finding had been confirmed by a court decision. The new regulation is expected to simplify the confiscation process for unjustified assets, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of enforcement actions and asset recovery.

Another amendment enhances the powers of the NIA leadership, granting new competencies to the Vice-President of NIA. The Vice-President will have the authority to revoke acts issued by integrity inspectors ex officio if they were issued in serious violation of the law or the methodology for conducting inspections. According to the [explanatory note](#) of the draft law, this amendment aims to strengthen uniform practices within NIA and establish an internal control mechanism. In the event of revocation by the Vice-President, the inspection file will be randomly reassigned for continuation by another inspector. The decision to revoke will not be subject to appeal.

Integrity inspectors will also gain the authority to terminate the mandates of public officials if, after completing an inspection procedure, they identify significant unjustified assets. The draft law further introduces stricter penalties for false declarations when undeclared assets exceed two times the average national salary. Additionally, the law establishes a new mandatory proportion for checks, increasing the number of public officials subject to annual inspections from 20% to 40%.

The draft law also strengthens cooperation between the NIA and other institutions, such as the State Tax Service and the Agency for the Recovery of Criminal Assets, to track and recover assets hidden abroad. To enhance cross-border cooperation, Parliament ratified an [international treaty](#) on data exchange for asset verification during the same session. This treaty will facilitate the detection of undeclared properties, businesses, or bank accounts. NIA will be responsible for managing the exchange of information, and responses to international requests must be provided within 30 days.

The amendments will come into force upon publication in the Official Gazette, with the exception of certain provisions that will take effect starting April 1, 2025. As a result, most of the amendments will impact asset and interest declarations for the year 2025, but their practical application will begin in 2026.

MOLDOVA AT THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS (ECTHR) IN 2024: KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND FINDINGS

On February 3, 2025, the LRCM presented an [analytical note](#) on the Republic of Moldova's activity at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in 2024. The analysis was based on the [ECtHR's Annual Report](#) for that year and the review of ECtHR case law concerning Moldovan cases.

In 2024, the majority of ECtHR judgments involving Moldova dealt with inadequate investigations into ill-treatment and discrimination cases, deficiencies in protective measures within psychiatric hospitals, and failures to combat domestic violence.

In 2024, the ECtHR registered 363 applications against the Republic of Moldova, marking the lowest number of applications in the last ten years. Moldova ranked 11th among the 46 Council of Europe member states regarding the number of applications per capita, with Moldovans addressing the ECtHR three times more frequently than the European average.

As of December 31, 2024, 1,144 applications against the country were awaiting examination. About 95% of these have a high chance of success. This figure exceeds the total number of applications for which Moldova has been condemned in the 27 years it has been subject to ECtHR jurisdiction. In terms of pending applications, Moldova ranks 10th among the 46 Council of Europe member states.

By December 31, 2024, the ECtHR had issued 616 judgments in Moldovan cases, 17 of which were delivered in 2024. In 531 (86%) of these cases, at least one violation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was found. In this respect, Moldova surpasses the United Kingdom, Germany, Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands—countries that ratified the ECHR much earlier than Moldova and have a significantly larger population.

The most frequent violations found by the ECtHR in Moldovan cases continue to be non-enforcement of judicial decisions, ill-treatment, inadequate investigation of ill-treatment and deaths, poor detention conditions, illegal detention, and the unlawful annulment of final judicial decisions.

Based on all judgments and decisions made until the end of last year, Moldova was required to pay nearly EUR 23 million, of which EUR 162,200 were paid in 2024.

TIMELINE OF ATTACKS AGAINST CSOS AND HRDS THROUGHOUT 2024 – FEBRUARY 2025

In February 2025, the LRCM [released](#) the eighth edition of its report, „Timeline of Attacks on Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in Moldova.” The report examines over 50 attacks that occurred between January 1, 2024, and February 28, 2025, including those related to the suspension of funding for U.S. foreign assistance programs. The purpose of the document is to highlight false narratives and combat orchestrated attacks, urging public authorities, politicians, and other key actors to put an end to such practices and uphold a safe and unrestricted environment for CSOs and HRDs. Additionally, the report serves as a resource for CSOs and HRDs to develop informed and strategic responses, fostering solidarity and cooperation within the sector.

The timeline of attacks encompasses a range of tactics, including defamatory statements made by public figures or influential individuals, disinformation campaigns spread through articles and manipulative posts on online platforms, particularly anonymous ones. Other forms of attack include hate speech, stigmatization, threats during press conferences or live social media broadcasts, and attempts to discredit CSOs, journalists, and HRDs by associating them

Attacks against CSOs and HRDs continue to be actively propagated on social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok, as well as on anonymous Telegram channels. In the absence of adequate regulation, these platforms continue to enable the rapid and widespread distribution of false, manipulative, and stigmatizing content.

with controversial issues. Moreover, instances of restricted access to public information and the initiation of abusive judicial proceedings (SLAPP) have been used to intimidate and silence these actors. Monitoring and documenting these attacks has been critical, as many CSOs, journalists, and HRDs have been targeted with discrediting efforts, particularly when advocating for reforms, supporting European integration, advancing human rights (especially for marginalized or disadvantaged groups), or receiving foreign funding for these initiatives.

The analysis revealed that while the overall number of attacks remained consistent with the previous year, the methods of dissemination have become more sophisticated. Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok continue to be the primary platforms used for such attacks, but there has been a notable rise in the use of anonymous Telegram channels. The anonymity and lack of regulation on these platforms facilitate the rapid spread of false and manipulative content, while the absence of effective accountability mechanisms hinders efforts to combat disinformation and protect CSOs from smear campaigns. The attacks observed in the past year were largely shaped by key events, including the presidential elections, the constitutional referendum in the fall of 2024, the competition for the position of prosecutor general, and the annual "Moldova Pride" festival. Additionally, the suspension of external funding, particularly from U.S. federal sources, has led to a surge in attacks targeting organizations financially supported by USAID. CSOs involved in judicial reform have been especially targeted, as well as media outlets and journalists investigating corruption cases, particularly during the election period.

CSOs have been accused of promoting foreign interests, benefiting from substantial external resources, and having „privileged access” to the media, development partners, and public institutions. Some groups perceive them as responsible for failed reforms and accuse them of capturing key state positions or labeling them as „GONGOs” (Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organizations), suspecting them of serving government political interests. A more recent tactic for discrediting the civil society sector involves the creation of organizations that, while appearing to focus on social, educational, or entertainment initiatives, are actually aligned with political parties or figures (e.g., the [Evrazia organization](#)), thus diverting civic activity and promoting hidden agendas.

The attacks have not been confined solely to CSOs but also extended to media representatives and HRDs, including investigative journalists Viorica Tătaru and Andrei Captarenco, the director of Ziarul de Gardă (ZdG) Alina Radu, investigative journalist Mariana Rață, Nokta.md editor Mihail Sirkeli, TV8 journalist Ștefan Bejan, ZdG journalist Felicia Ganev, and activists advocating for the rights of the LGBT community in Moldova. These individuals have been subjected to attacks involving defamatory labeling, the unlawful restriction of access to requested public information, and acts of intimidation, including physical gestures or interference with their technical equipment. Furthermore, they have been accused of political bias and of promoting an external agenda, being portrayed as a threat to national interests.

I IN BRIEF

On **February 4, 2025**, the SCJ **dismissed** the appeal filed by anti-corruption prosecutor and former candidate for the SCP, **Cristina Gladcov**, challenging the Pre-Vetting Commission's decision from December 4, 2023. The Court found the allegations regarding the impartiality of certain commission members to be irrelevant, citing a lack of concrete evidence. It also concluded that the suspicions surrounding Gladcov's integrity had not been dispelled, which justified her non-promotion. The SCJ **rejected** arguments based on the principle of *res judicata* and the right to probation, clarifying that the SCJ's earlier decision from August 1, 2023, regarding her reevaluation did not guarantee her promotion, and that the annulment of a previous decision did not imply a predetermined outcome.

On **February 11, 2025**, the SCJ **dismissed** the appeal of **Sergiu Osoianu**, the interim president of the Strășeni Court and former candidate for the SCM, challenging the Pre-Vetting Commission's decision from April 29, 2024. The Court noted that despite multiple opportunities to address deficiencies during the reevaluation process and in court, the judge failed to dispel suspicions regarding his integrity. His acceptance of unjustified income, failure to meet tax obligations, and lack of cooperation with the Commission undermined the perception of his fairness and professionalism.

On **February 12, 2025**, the SCJ upheld the legality of the decisions of the SCM to approve the initiation of criminal investigations against several high-ranking judges. These include **Ion Druță**, former president of the SCJ; **Alexandru Gheorghies**, former president of the Bălți Court of Appeal; **Oleg Sternioală**, former SCJ judge; and **Tatiana Avasiloaie**, a judge in a lower court. The SCJ decision confirms that the SCM acted proportionally and within its discretionary powers. All four judges had been subjects of journalistic investigations, with reports highlighting significant financial and ethical integrity issues, and some are currently under investigation for illicit enrichment. The SCJ's decisions now enable the prosecution to proceed with its investigations.

On **February 12, 2025**, the Council of Europe launched its **Action Plan** for the Republic of Moldova for the 2025-2028 period. This strategic programming framework aims to further align Moldova's legislation, institutions, and practices with European standards in the areas of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The plan focuses on strengthening the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights at the national level. Key areas of focus include aligning national anti-discrimination laws and practices with European standards, promoting gender equality, enhancing the independence and accountability of the judiciary, and improving electoral legislation and practices.

On **February 12, 2025**, the LRCM submitted a **legal opinion** on the draft law concerning compensation for damages resulting from violations of the right to a trial within a reasonable time. LRCM proposed several amendments, including revising provisions that currently prevent the granting of compensation

in cases where reasonable trial timeframes are not respected. The LRCM also recommended clarifying the criteria for the motivation of judicial decisions, removing the requirement to request expedited procedures before filing a claim related to trial timeframes, and introducing a mechanism for the amicable settlement of such claims.

On **February 14, 2025**, [Ramona Strugariu](#) was appointed as the new director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). The former member of the European Parliament was selected by the NIJ Council following the interview stage. According to her [proposed development plan](#) for the institution, Strugariu committed to enhancing transparency, integrity, and meritocracy in the professional training of judges, addressing concerns regarding the selection and examination processes within the NIJ. Her term will last for four years. The appointment comes after the NIJ director position had been vacant for over two years.

On **February 18, 2025**, the LRCM issued a [legal opinion](#) on the draft law amending certain normative acts related to the performance evaluation of judges and prosecutors. LRCM recommended the inclusion of provisions establishing a clear maximum duration for interim appointments, standardized remuneration criteria for members of the SCP, and the introduction of evaluation criteria for chief prosecutors in line with the standards applicable to court presidents and vice-presidents.

On **February 18, 2025**, the SCM [announced](#) the launch of a competition to fill vacant judge positions in all branches of the Court of Appeal (North, Center, and South). The deadline for submitting applications is March 31, 2025. In addition, a competition was opened for the temporary transfer of 10 vacant positions at the Court of Appeal Center. Furthermore, the SCM announced a competition for the selection of civil society representatives to join the Board for the selection and evaluation of judges. Applications for this competition must be submitted within 30 calendar days from the date the announcement is published on the SCM's website.

On **February 19, 2025**, Veronica Dragalin, the head of the Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office (APO), [announced](#) her resignation, citing a [legislative initiative](#) proposing the dissolution of the institution she led. Dragalin strongly criticized the proposal, asserting that it undermines the progress made and jeopardizes the independence of the judiciary. Her resignation request was accepted, and her employment relationship was [formally concluded](#) on March 5, 2025. [Marcel Dumbravan](#), one of Dragalin's interim deputies, was appointed as the interim head of the APO.

On **February 20, 2025**, CRJM issued a [legal opinion](#) on the draft law amending the organizational framework for vetting commissions for judges and prosecutors. LRCM recommended the introduction of provisions to sanction individuals obstructing the work of these commissions, clearer regulations regarding the hearing of candidates, rules to ensure balanced representation of members proposed to the commissions, and criteria for the appointment of substitute members.

On **February 25, 2025**, the SCM, following a competition, [approved](#) the temporary transfer of judges [Gheorghe Stratulat](#) and [Alexandru Negru](#) to the SCJ. Their assignments at the CSJ will commence on April 1, 2025, and will continue until the SCJ is composed of at least 11 permanent judges.

On **February 25 and 26, 2025**, the SCP conducted interviews for candidates from both the prosecutor's office and civil society to fill positions in two of its specialized boards. As a result, the SCP appointed prosecutors Marcel Dimitraş and Natalia Andronic to the Selection and Evaluation Board, and Constantin Şuşu and Eugenia Zubco to the Disciplinary and Ethics Board. From civil society, the SCP selected Sergiu Beşliu, Tatiana Rotaru, and Elena Demian as members of the Selection and Evaluation Board. As a result, the Selection and Evaluation Board was fully renewed and became functional, consisting of two prosecutor members elected by the General Assembly of Prosecutors (GAP), two prosecutors appointed by the SCP, and three civil society representatives. The Disciplinary and Ethics Board was also renewed with four prosecutor members, two of whom were elected by the GAP and two appointed by the SCP.

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