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This News Digest issue was prepared within the research project [The Dynamics of the Judiciary in Ukraine in the Context of the Rule of Law and the EU Accession Aspirations](#) and covers the period from June 1 to September 15, 2024. Moving forward, there will be regular updates on news in the Ukrainian judiciary field, including permanent and variable topics.

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HR POLICY AND THE JUDICIAL CAREER

On 1 July 2024, the working group at the High Council of Justice completed the draft of the Unified Indicators for assessing the integrity and professional ethics of a judge (or a candidate for the position of judge). [More details in Ukrainian.](#)

The prepared draft document outlines key terms, evaluation principles, and the content of integrity and professional ethics criteria.

Background: In February 2024, by decision of the High Council of Justice, a working group was established to develop unified criteria for assessing the integrity and professional ethics of a judge. The working group consists of the members of the High Council of Justice, the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine, the Council of Judges of Ukraine, the Public Integrity Council, judges, and representatives of international projects.

On 5 July 2024, in the presence of President Zelensky, a solemn ceremony was held for judges taking the oath for the first time upon their appointment to the position of judge. A total of 248 first-instance judges took the oath, including 208 judges of local general courts, 22 judges of administrative courts, and 18 judges of commercial courts. [Photos are available here.](#)

Under Article 57 of the Law of Ukraine "On the Judiciary and the Status of Judges," a person appointed to the position of judge for the first time gains the authority of a judge after taking the judicial oath.

The judges who took the oath were appointed to their positions by decrees of the President of Ukraine based on submissions from the High Council of Justice.

Reference: On July 4, 2024, the President of Ukraine signed 38 decrees appointing 215 judges; on May 8, 2024, 24 decrees were signed appointing 114 judges.

From January to July 2024, the High Council of Justice decided to dismiss 160 judges. [More details in Ukrainian.](#)

Under general circumstances, 141 judges were dismissed, specifically:

- 134 judges were dismissed due to the retirement procedure.
- 7 local court judges were dismissed due to the submission of applications for resignation on their request.

Under special circumstances, the High Council of Justice dismissed 19 judges, specifically:

- 15 judges for committing significant disciplinary offenses,
- 4 judges based on the "Transitional Provisions" of the Constitution of Ukraine, following recommendations from the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

According to the High Council of Justice (HCJ) information, during the first seven months of 2024, the HCJ received 147 reports of interference in the professional activities of judges concerning the administration of justice and actions that violate the guarantees of judicial independence or undermine the authority of justice.

Taking into account previous periods, the HCJ has reviewed 159 reports from judges since the beginning of 2024. [More details in Ukrainian.](#)

As a result of reviewing 64 reports of interference with judges' activities regarding the administration of justice, the HCJ adopted 63 decisions to take responsive measures:

- Appeals to the prosecutor's office and law enforcement agencies for information on the disclosure and investigation of crimes;
- Submissions to relevant authorities or officials for identifying and holding accountable those responsible for actions or omissions that undermine judicial independence or the authority of justice, etc.

After reviewing 95 reports from judges, the HCJ made 25 decisions to approve 86 conclusions from HCJ members indicating that there were no grounds to take measures to ensure judicial independence and the authority of justice.

Reference: According to the Law of Ukraine On the High Council of Justice, the HCJ takes measures to ensure the authority of justice and judicial independence. Specifically, the Council submits proposals to relevant authorities or officials for identifying and holding accountable those responsible for actions or omissions that violate guarantees of judicial independence or undermine the authority of justice.

Article 376 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine provides for criminal liability for interference with the activities of judicial authorities.

CHALLENGES FOR THE JUDICIARY DURING WARTIME

On July 2, 2024, the High Council of Justice (HCJ) held an online meeting with experts from the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ). During the meeting, the parties discussed future cooperation regarding the development and approval of effective judicial administration tools, as well as standards for staffing, financial, material-technical, and other support for the courts.

HCJ member Serhiy Burlakov informed that to meet the standards established by the European Court of Human Rights regarding the duration of case reviews, the judiciary needs about 14,000 judges. Currently, the approved

number of judges in Ukraine is over 7,000, while about 4,500 judges are administering justice.

The staffing deficit affects the delays in case reviews, leading to non-compliance with Article 6 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Another issue is the increase in categories of cases that the Ukrainian judicial system had not previously encountered. Specifically, this includes cases related to war crimes, the status of combatants, the establishment of death facts, as well as family and inheritance disputes involving a large number of deceased Ukrainians. At the same time, the demands on the quality of court decisions have significantly increased.

HCJ member Vitaliy Salikhov also highlighted the uneven distribution of workload among different courts. For instance, there are courts in districts with a small number of cases where judges can review them promptly. At the same time, there are courts in large cities with workloads exceeding the norms by 10–15 times, making it physically impossible for judges to prepare decisions/judgments on time.

The parties agreed to establish a working group that will include international and domestic experts who will comprehensively analyze the current situation.

On August 15, 2024, the State Judicial Administration published an Analytical Report on damaged and destroyed court buildings due to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation and their restoration as of July 24, 2024.

Since the beginning of the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, 142 buildings belonging to 132 judicial institutions have sustained damage of varying degrees, up to complete destruction and looting of property.

Specifically, this concerns:

- 134 buildings that are courts (120 courts);
- 6 buildings of the Territorial Departments of the State Judicial Administration of Ukraine and the Territorial Departments of the Court Security Service (in Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Chernihiv, and Kherson regions);
- 1 building of the National School of Judges of Ukraine;
- 1 building of the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine. [More details in Ukrainian.](#)

On August 16, 2024, the High Council of Justice (HCJ) approved a consultative opinion on Draft Law #10301, which proposes the introduction of specialization for judges in handling military criminal offenses, criminal offenses against peace, humanity's security, and the international legal order.

The aim is to enhance the effectiveness of justice in these matters and to ensure an appropriate level of trust from military personnel.

The High Council of Justice concurred that judge specialization could serve as an effective mechanism to improve the quality of justice and reduce case processing times. However, it also noted that the possibility of implementing judge specialization as a mandatory principle within the internal organization of all local general and appellate courts in Ukraine is currently limited. [More details in Ukrainian.](#)

The Court Security Service reported that in 2023, nearly 200,000 prohibited items were prevented from being brought into court facilities during public visits.

From January 1, 2023, during regular inspections, citizens were found to be carrying over 5,000 units of firearms and nearly 90,000 rounds of ammunition. During the reporting period, there were over 3,500 reports of potential bomb threats affecting more than 5,000 buildings belonging to courts, justice authorities, and related institutions. However, none of these reports were confirmed.

In 2024, a similar trend is being observed. The Court Security Service informs the public about these statistics monthly. [More details in Ukrainian.](#)

On September 6, with the support of EU Project Pravo-Justice, a round table on the "Optimisation of the Judicial Map in Ukraine: Current State, Challenges and Prospects" was held in Kyiv.

The Head of the Supreme Court, Stanislav Kravchenko, noted that the reform of the court network should help ensure proper case review and judicial oversight in the context of a staffing shortage in the courts

Denys Maslov, Head of the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Policy, noted that the optimization of the court network should be approached with extreme caution, with all processes thoroughly worked out, especially during martial law. According to him, the reform should begin on the scale of one pilot region. In his opinion, this could be the Transcarpathia region.

Iryna Mudra, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, noted that optimizing the court network is a complex and socially sensitive issue, especially under martial law. At the same time, its proper implementation will help balance the workload of judges across the country, promote adherence to reasonable case processing times, assist in optimizing expenditures on the judiciary, which, in the long term, will result in cost savings for court maintenance, and also address the issue of changing Soviet and communist-era court names. [More details in Ukrainian.](#)

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE UKRAINIAN JUDICIARY

On 6 June, the Ukrainian Parliament ratified the Framework Agreement on EU financing under the Ukraine Facility concluded between Ukraine and the EU for a total of EUR 50 billion. The agreement officially launches the implementation of the Ukraine Plan and defines the mechanisms of financial cooperation between Ukraine and the EU.

The Ukraine Facility Plan includes 69 reforms among them the reform of the judicial system. Thus, according to the Framework Agreement, Ukraine undertakes to ensure a high level of transparency and control in the use of funds provided by the European Union. To this end, mechanisms will be created to prevent corruption risks and the institutional capacity for monitoring and control will be intensified. The Agreement provides for close cooperation between the Ukrainian authorities and the EU institutions, which will also contribute to European integration. [More details.](#)

On 25 June 2024, the first Intergovernmental Conference between Ukraine and the EU took place in Luxembourg, marking the start of actual negotiations on Ukraine's membership in the European Union.

The EU has now invited the Commission to continue to assess the state of preparedness of Ukraine for opening negotiations in specific areas and identify the issues that will most likely come up in the negotiations, starting with the fundamentals' cluster which, under the Negotiating Framework, will be opened first.

As a future member state, Ukraine will be expected to continue to adhere to the values listed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, namely the respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

The broadcast of the first EU-Ukraine Intergovernmental Conference is available [here](#). Background information about the EU enlargement policy: Ukraine, can be found [here](#).

Background: Ukraine applied for EU membership in February 2022 and was granted EU candidate status in June 2022. The EU held its first intergovernmental conference with Ukraine in June 2024.

On 15 July 2024 at the meeting of the Steering Committee of the EU Project "Pravo-Justice III", representatives of the Ukrainian judiciary discussed the outcomes of cooperation with Ukrainian government bodies in the field of justice and the judicial system.

In particular, the Chairman of the High Council of Justice, Hryhoriy Usyk, noted that from November 1, 2023 (when the disciplinary function was restored) to the end of 2023, more than 14 thousand disciplinary complaints were registered. From January to June 2024, over 4 thousand more complaints were received. The average number of complaints received per month is around 700, while the members of the HCJ review an average of 900 complaints per

month. Between November 2023 and June 2024, approximately 5 thousand disciplinary complaints were reviewed.

As a result of the review of disciplinary complaints, the Disciplinary Chambers of the HCJ issued 65 decisions to hold judges accountable for disciplinary actions. Specifically, the following sanctions were imposed: warnings for 31 judges, reprimands with the deprivation of the right to receive additional payments to the official salary for one month for 10 judges, severe reprimands with the deprivation of the right to receive additional payments to the official salary for three months for 8 judges, temporary suspension from the administration of justice for one judge, and dismissal recommendations for 17 judges.

The Chairman of the HCJ reported that in 2024, the HCJ issued decisions to submit recommendations to the President of Ukraine for the appointment of 357 judges. At the same time, more than 450 judges resigned in 2023–2024. Ensuring the rule of law and citizens' access to justice is challenging given such a catastrophic shortage of judicial staff. Therefore, the primary focus of the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine and the High Council of Justice should be on the issue of replenishing the judiciary.

On 9 September 2024, a coalition of civil society organizations - the Agency for Legislative Initiatives, Transparency International Ukraine, ZMINA Human Rights Centre, Tomorrow's Lawyer, and the Ukrainian Bar Association - published the final version of the Shadow Report to Chapter 23 'Justice and Fundamental Rights' of the European Commission's 2023 Report on Ukraine.

This is the first report submitted by Ukraine's civil society sector to the European Commission since the country became a candidate for EU membership. The period covered by the experts is June 2023–August 2024. The Report provides an analysis of the current state of affairs, progress made by Ukraine, and ongoing issues in the areas of the rule of law (courts, prosecution, Bar, legal education), the fight against corruption, and the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms. The Report also contains approximately 350 recommendations to address the urgent challenges of the current stage of reforms in these areas in [full text in English](#).

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AND UKRAINE

On 21 July 2024, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted the Law On the Ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and Amendments to It. The draft of this law was adopted along with the draft laws On Amendments to the Criminal and Criminal Procedure Codes of Ukraine in Connection with the Ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and Amendments to It.

Background: The Rome Statute was signed on behalf of Ukraine on 20 January 2000, under the President of Ukraine's Directive, issued on 11 December 1999.

Article 8 of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union stipulates that the Parties shall cooperate to strengthen peace and international justice by ratifying and

implementing the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of 1998 and related documents.

Ukraine ratified the Association Agreement with the following declaration: "Ukraine's obligations arising from Article 8 of the Agreement regarding the ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998 will be fulfilled after appropriate amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine have been made."

According to Para 6 of Article 124 of the Constitution of Ukraine, as amended by Law No. 1401-VIII of June 2, 2016, which came into force on June 30, 2019, Ukraine may recognize the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court under the conditions defined by the Rome Statute.

Starting from 25 July 2024, all owners of damaged or destroyed residential immovable property can submit claims to the Register of Damage for Ukraine (RD4U) for compensation of damage to their apartments and houses caused by the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

This important update allows approximately 300–500 thousand owners of damaged and destroyed homes to submit claims to RD4U. This includes those whose property is located in the territories of Ukraine that are under temporary occupation or in active combat areas, those who have not participated in the “eRecovery” program run by the Ukrainian Government, and those unable to register their property in the relevant registries in Ukraine. The [Register will soon open for the submission of claims in other categories](#), including claims related to the death and disappearance of immediate family members, involuntary internal displacement, destruction of Ukraine’s infrastructure, and several additional categories related to damage or destruction of property. [More details.](#)

Background: When RD4U opened for the submission of claims on 2 April 2024, participation in the Ukrainian “eRecovery” program was a requirement for submitting a claim. RD4U’s technical system has since undergone considerable improvements and rigorous beta testing, and now anyone whose home has been damaged or destroyed on or after 24 February 2022 can submit a claim.

After the update, Claims to the Register can be submitted through the Diia web portal at <https://diia.gov.ua/services/RD4U> that is accessible from every device connected to the Internet, including mobile phones. Diia Mobile application can be used to track the status of claims already submitted and to receive notifications with updates about RD4U work and its services.

ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES

On 5 September 2024, the 5th anniversary of the High Anti-Corruption Court was marked.

The event was co-organized by the European Union Anti-Corruption Initiative (EUACI) co-funded and implemented by Denmark on behalf of the EU.

In her speech on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the procedural activity of the High Anti-Corruption Court, its Head, Vira Mykhailenko, mentioned:

"The High Anti-Corruption Court is more than just an institution. It is a guarantee that living by the principles of honesty and truth in Ukraine is both possible and necessary. These achievements would not have been possible without your trust, support, and professionalism. Every judge and every staff member has contributed to ensuring that justice prevails every day. We recognize that our path has not been easy. The challenges we face are not only pressure and attempts at discreditation but also systemic problems that require a comprehensive approach.

Over these five years, we have overcome many obstacles, but even more lie ahead. Our society continues to change, and we must rise to meet these changes. We remain steadfast, ready for new challenges, and determined in our actions." [More details in Ukrainian.](#)

Background: The High Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine is composed of 27 judges, and the Appeals Chamber of the High Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine is composed of 11 judges, The HACC is a court with all-Ukrainian jurisdiction created to consider specific categories of cases including high-profile cases. The main arguments for establishing the HACC were the need for greater judicial efficiency, integrity, and independence in addressing corruption cases, especially those involving political elites.

In September 2024 Transparency International Ukraine launched the online High Anti-Corruption Court cases platform - [HACC Decided](#).

HACC Decided is a comprehensive resource covering high-profile corruption cases of the HACC, containing all court decisions, details, infographics with the course of key events in cases, and analytics by experts. Transparency International Ukraine, an anti-corruption CSO, developed the platform.

This resource stores: texts of court decisions, infographics with key events, case descriptions, and other related materials. The site presents detailed analytics regarding the most high-profile cases: the progress of the case, an explanation of the court's decision, and what to expect next. There is the possibility of tracking the case via email.

Information about the cases of the High Anti-Corruption Court is constantly updated on the website, so it is always relevant. The platform has an advanced case search, a section with the most high-profile cases of the HACC, analytics by TI Ukraine experts, and the main news about the HACC decisions. The required section can be selected both in the drop-down menu on the left and in the top panel of the site.

ONLINE JUSTICE AND ELECTRONIC COURTS

On July 8, 2024, the State Judicial Administration announced that online broadcasting of court sessions has been taking place in the Ukrainian judicial system for nine years.

The pilot broadcast occurred on June 3, 2015. Two courtrooms in the Sviatoshynskyi District Court of Kyiv and the Court of Appeal of Lviv Region were equipped to allow media representatives, Ukrainian and international observers, and the general public to view the broadcasts on YouTube.

The first court session broadcast on YouTube took place on July 6, 2015, in the Sviatoshynskyi District Court of Kyiv, in the case concerning the killings of people on February 20, 2014, during the Euromaidan.

Subsequently, online broadcasting has expanded to include not only court sessions but also sessions of governance bodies within the judicial system.

Reference:

- You can watch the video broadcast of court sessions online [here](#).
- You can watch the video broadcast of sessions of the High Council of Justice [here](#).
- You can watch the video broadcast of sessions of the High Qualifications Commission of Judges of Ukraine [here](#).
- You can watch the video broadcast of sessions of the High Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine [here](#).
- You can watch the video broadcast of the Council of Judges of Ukraine [here](#).