



News Digest No. 5

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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 December 15, 2024 to January 15, 2025.

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HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND THE JUDICIAL CAREER

On December 17, 2024, the Press Service of the High Council of Justice (HCJ) reported that during eleven months of 2024, the HCJ dismissed 256 judges.

213 judges were dismissed on their request for retirement, including:

128 judges of local courts;

60 judges of appellate courts;

6 judges of the Supreme Court;

7 judges of the Higher Administrative Court of Ukraine;

3 judges of the Higher Commercial Court of Ukraine;

9 judges of the Higher Specialized Court of Ukraine for Civil and Criminal Cases.

10 judges of local courts were dismissed on their request for resignation.

Additionally, 27 judges were dismissed for committing significant disciplinary offenses. For more details in Ukrainian, please read [here](#).

On December 26, 2024, the professional standards entered into force. The National Qualifications Agency has included the professional standards "[Judge](#)" and "[Prosecutor](#)" in the Register of Qualifications.

This vital step towards improving the legal profession took place in compliance with the requirements, in particular, of the Law of Ukraine “On Education” and the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine “On Approval of the Procedure for the Development, Enactment, and Revision of Professional Standards.”

The High Council of Justice [explained](#) why the professional standard “Judge” is essential: The standards define the requirements for the qualification of lawyers, which ensures high professionalism and competence in the administration of justice. Ethical conduct and rule of law requirements reduce the risk of abuse and misconduct. The standards contribute to the unity of approaches, making the work of lawyers transparent and predictable.

Precise requirements stimulate high-quality performance of duties. They are the basis for educational programs and advanced training.

JUDICIAL INDEPENDENCE

On December 17, 2024, the HCJ press service [announced](#) that the HCJ had approved the Uniform Indicators for Assessing the Integrity and Professional Ethics of a Judge (Candidate for the Position of Judge) – hereinafter referred to as the Uniform Indicators.

The Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On the Judiciary and the Status of Judges” and Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Improving the Procedures of Judicial Careers” empowers the High Council of Justice to approve the Uniform Indicators after consultations with the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine (HQCJ), the Council of Judges of Ukraine (CJC), and the Public Council of Integrity (PCI).

The purpose of developing Uniform Indicators is to introduce unified standards for assessing a judge's integrity and professional ethics. Uniform indicators will be used during the HCJ, HQCJ, and PCI qualification assessment of judges and competitive procedures for vacant positions of judges. Judges will also actively use uniform indicators in case of appeals against selection procedures.

According to the [Uniform Indicators](#), the assessment of the integrity and professional ethics of a judge (candidate for the position of judge) consists in assessing the compliance of a judge (candidate for the position of judge) with the following indicators:

1. independence;
2. Impartiality;
3. compliance with ethical standards and impeccable behavior in professional activities and personal life;
4. honesty;
5. Integrity;
6. incorruptibility;
7. the legality of the sources of origin of property, the correspondence of the standard of living of a judge (candidate for the position of judge) or members of his/her family to the declared income, the correspondence of the lifestyle of a judge (candidate for the position of judge) to his/her status.

On December 18, 2024, the HCJ Press Service [reported](#) that during eleven months of 2024, the HCJ received 208 reports of interference in the professional activities of judges in the administration of justice and actions that violated the guarantees of the independence of judges or undermined the authority of justice.

On December 23, 2024, the HCJ Disciplinary Inspectors Service will [start working](#).

For reference: the Disciplinary Inspectors Service (DIS) was established to exercise the HCJ's powers to conduct disciplinary proceedings against judges. It consists of HCJ disciplinary inspectors, the head of the service, his deputy, and employees who provide organisational support to the service.

CHALLENGES FOR THE JUDICIARY DURING WARTIME

On December 19, 2024, the most prominent external [cyberattack](#) on Ukraine's state registers in 2024 occurred. As a result of the attack, the work of state registers under the Ministry of Justice's competence was temporarily suspended.

This affected the Unified Register of Powers of Attorney, the Register of Special Forms and Notarial Documents, the Inheritance Register, the State Register of Civil Status Acts, and the State Register of Property Rights.

The Unified State Register, which contains data on all legal entities, individual entrepreneurs, and public associations, was also blocked. This attack negatively affected the work of courts and judicial authorities. At the beginning of January, work on restoring registers has been ongoing.

The Ministry of Justice of Ukraine [reported](#) that on January 9, 2025, the work of the Unified State Register of Legal Entities, Individual Entrepreneurs, and Public Associations (USR) was resumed after a large-scale cyberattack by Russia.

On December 24, 2024, [the High Council of Justice](#) adopted a decision On a public appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Regarding Affordable Mortgage Lending for Employees of the Judiciary.

The High Council of Justice asks the Government to consider amending the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated August 2, 2022, to include judges, employees of the staff (secretariats) of courts, bodies, and institutions of the justice system, as well as members of their families, in the list of preferential categories of persons who can apply for affordable mortgage lending at a fixed annual rate of 3% in national currency.

The HCJ emphasises that many judicial system employees had to change their place of residence after the territorial jurisdiction of court cases was changed; their housing was destroyed, life circumstances became much more complicated, and the level of wages did not allow them to meet basic needs.

For reference: according to the State Judicial Administration of Ukraine (as of January 1, 2024) since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, **410 residential premises** of judges, court staff, and territorial departments of the State Judicial Administration have been damaged.

According to the State Judicial Administration of Ukraine Analytical [Report](#) (as of January 4, 2025), since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine, **149 premises of 138 courts and judicial institutions** have been destroyed or damaged to varying degrees.

On January 3, 2024, the Court Security Service (CSS) published the [infographic reports](#) of the mining of judicial institutions in December 2024.

The CSS responded to 147 reports of mining 159 judicial institutions in December 2024.

The largest number of pseudo-mines was experienced by Poltava, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, Khmelnytskyi, and Lviv regions of Ukraine.

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE UKRAINIAN JUDICIARY

On December 19, 2024, the Law on [amendments](#) to the Law “On the Judiciary and the Status of Judges of Ukraine” was adopted, which, in particular, excludes the provisions on the “deliberation room” and simultaneously replaces the institute of “secrecy of the deliberation room” with the institute of “secrecy of court decision-making.”

The Law defines “the need to ensure coordination and balance of the improvement process, taking into account the further harmonisation of national legislation with the legislation of the European Union.”

This approach shows that a court decision can be made in any courtroom, not in a separate room called a “deliberation room.”

On December 20, 2024, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine received a petition from 56 members of Parliament requesting a review of certain legislative provisions. These provisions involve the participation of foreign citizens and representatives of international organizations in forming and overseeing state bodies.

The petition challenges laws related to the Constitutional Court, judiciary, anti-corruption institutions, law enforcement, and customs services. MPs argue that involving international experts in creating and monitoring key state institutions, particularly in anti-corruption and judicial areas, has become a systematic practice, prompting the appeal.

The text of the constitutional petition in Ukrainian can be found [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AND UKRAINE

Ukraine officially became the 125th state party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) on January 1, 2025.

On January 1, 2025, Ukrainian state news agency [Ukrinform](#) reported that a Ukrainian flag was set up among the flags of other state parties at the ICC in the Hague.

“This means that it (Ukraine) is now a full-fledged state party to this international treaty and has all the rights and obligations assigned to state parties,” ICC spokesperson Fadi el-Abdallah told Ukrinform.

For reference: the Ukrainian parliament ratified the Roman Statute in August 2024, 24 years since Kyiv first signed it. Ratification is necessary for an international agreement to hold sway over a sovereign country’s actions and citizens in specified areas.

The Roman Statute is the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court, granting it jurisdiction over four crimes: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression.

Ukraine ratified the statute with the caveat that it would not recognise the court's jurisdiction over Ukrainian citizens in cases of war crimes for seven years following its official adoption.

ANTICORRUPTION MEASURES

At the end of 2024, the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine published several reports on auditing justice and the judiciary.

In particular, on December 26, 2024, the Accounting Chamber (AC) announced the completion of the High Anti-Corruption Court (HACC) audit.

The AC investigated the following issues: the prerequisites for the creation and functioning of the HACC, to what extent it fulfils the tasks of conducting judicial proceedings, and to what extent it is provided with financial, logistical, and human resources.

The audit covers 2019–2023 and 9 months of 2024, and a longer period for certain issues.

The full text of the report in Ukrainian can be found [here](#).

On December 26, 2024, the AC also announced the completion of the analysis of the implementation of its recommendations in the field of judiciary and justice.

During 2020–2023 and nine months of 2024, the judiciary and justice authorities implemented almost 80% of the AC's recommendations.

The main objects of control in the field of judiciary and justice are the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, the State Judicial Administration of Ukraine, the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, the High Council of Justice, the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine, the Judicial Protection Service, the Coordination Center for Legal Aid, the Secretariat of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights.

Based on the results of 14 control measures carried out in the field of judiciary and justice, the Accounting Chamber provided 148 recommendations, of which 118 have been implemented so far.

The Supreme Court provided the highest level of implementation of recommendations – 100%, the Ministry of Justice – 90%, and the Coordination Centre for Legal Aid – 88%. The lowest rate of implementation of recommendations is in the HCJ – 59%.

The complete text of the Report on the analysis results regarding the implementation of the recommendations provided by the Accounting Chamber and the evaluation of their impact on the system of changes in the judiciary and justice field can be found [here](#).

On January 10, 2025, the State Judicial Administration of Ukraine shared the [Draft Anti-Corruption Program for 2025-2027](#) for public discussion.

The Program provides a set of measures to prevent, detect, and counteract corruption in the State Judicial Administration of Ukraine, ensure employees' compliance with anti-corruption legislation, and create additional safeguards against corruption and corruption-related offences. The Program was elaborated to comply with the requirements of Article 19 of the Law of Ukraine “On Prevention of Corruption.”

ONLINE JUSTICE AND ELECTRONIC COURTS

On December 30, 2024, the State Judicial Administration of Ukraine (SJAU) announced the completion of preparing the draft Concept for the Development of the Unified Judicial Information and Telecommunication System. The text of the Concept in Ukrainian can be found [here](#).

This document is the quintessence of automating the necessary business processes of courts, introducing proper accessibility of justice for citizens, optimising budget expenditures and applying standards for appropriate information protection.

The SJAU has defined the following digitalisation goals up to 2030:

1. Ukraine's rule of law index should increase to 0.78 (at the end of 2023, this indicator was 0.47).
2. The fastest trial in Europe.
3. All court procedures can be completed online.

Undoubtedly, it is impossible to achieve these goals in full solely through digitalization. However, the impact of high-quality digitalization of justice can indeed have a decisive effect on achieving the goals.

For reference: On May 20, 2015, the Decree of the President of Ukraine approved [the Strategy](#) for Reforming the Judiciary, Judicial Proceedings and Related Legal Institutions for 2015–2020, which defines the need for the phased introduction of e-justice tools, the creation of electronic management systems, the improvement of automated case distribution, the introduction of electronic payments, and audio and video recording of meetings.

On December 15, 2017, the [Law of Ukraine](#) “On Amendments to the Commercial Procedure Code of Ukraine, the Civil Procedure Code of Ukraine, the Code of Administrative Procedure

of Ukraine and Other Legislative Acts” came into force, according to which the courts, the High Council of Justice, the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine, the State Judicial Administration Service, their bodies and subdivisions were supposed to ensure the functioning of the Unified Judicial Information and Telecommunication Service System.