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Subject:	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

2025 EU Justice Scoreboard

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective justice systems are essential for the application and enforcement of EU law and upholding the rule of law and other values the EU is founded on and which are common to the Member States. National courts act as EU courts when applying EU law. It is national courts in the first place that ensure that the rights and obligations set in EU law are enforced effectively (Article 19 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU)).

In addition, effective justice systems are also essential for mutual trust and for improving the investment climate and the sustainability of long-term growth. This is why improving the efficiency, quality and independence of national justice systems features among the priorities of the European Semester – the EU's annual cycle of economic policy coordination. The 2025 EU Competitiveness Compass ([1]) and the accompanying 2025 Annual Single Market and Competitiveness Report ([2]) recall that respect for the rule of law is central for the functioning of the Single Market, as it provides a stable operating environment that gives the EU and its Member States a global competitive edge. The rule of law ensures a business environment in which laws apply effectively and uniformly, where businesses can work in another Member State on an equal footing with local companies, and budgets are spent on a transparent and objective basis. Well-functioning and fully independent justice systems can have a positive impact on investment and are key for investment protection. They are associated with greater productivity and competitiveness. They are also important for ensuring the effective cross-border enforcement of contracts, administrative decisions and dispute resolution, essential for the functioning of the Single Market ([3]).

In this context, the EU Justice Scoreboard gives an annual overview of indicators measuring the three essential parameters of effective justice systems:

- efficiency;
- quality;
- independence.

The new and updated figures include data on accessibility to justice for victims of crime, victims of violence against women/domestic violence and persons at risk of discrimination and older persons, as well as on the digitalisation of justice ([4]). The 2025 Scoreboard also further develops other indicators, in light of the inclusion of a single market dimension to the Rule of Law Report, as announced in the 2024–2029 Political Guidelines of President von der Leyen. This edition of the Scoreboard presents, under a new title "Other indicators relevant for the single market", the indicators relevant for the functioning of the single market, for which effective justice systems and respect for the rule of law are central. It solidifies the business and single market dimension by

[1] 2025 EU Compass to regain competitiveness and secure sustainable prosperity, COM(2025) 30 final.

[2] COM(2025) 26 final.

[3] See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Identifying and addressing barriers to the Single Market, COM(2020)93, and accompanying SWD(2020)54.

[4] See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Digitalisation of justice in the European Union: A toolbox of opportunities, COM(2020)710, and accompanying SWD(2020)540.

presenting new indicators on first instance public procurement review bodies, supreme audit institutions and national competition authorities.

– The Annual Rule of Law Cycle –

In 2020, the Commission set up the comprehensive Annual Rule of Law Cycle to deepen its monitoring of the rule of law situation in Member States. The Rule of Law Cycle acts as a preventive tool, promoting dialogue and joint awareness of rule of law issues. At the centre of the cycle is the annual Rule of Law Report, which provides a synthesis of significant developments – both positive and negative – in all Member States and in the EU as a whole. The report, whose latest edition was published on 24 July 2024, draws on a variety of sources, including the EU Justice Scoreboard ([5]). The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard has also been further developed to reflect the need for additional comparative information identified during the preparation of the 2024 Rule of Law Report, so as to support forthcoming Rule of Law Reports.

What is the EU Justice Scoreboard?

The EU Justice Scoreboard is an annual comparative information tool. Its purpose is to assist Member States in improving the effectiveness of their national justice systems by providing objective, reliable and comparable data on a number of indicators relevant for the assessment of the (i) efficiency, (ii) quality and (iii) independence of justice systems in all Member States. It does not present an overall single ranking. Rather, it gives an overview of how all Member States' justice systems function, based on indicators that are of common interest and relevance for all Member States.

The Scoreboard does not promote any particular type of justice system and treats all Member States on an equal footing.

Efficiency, quality and independence are the essential parameters of an effective justice system, whatever the model of the national justice system or the legal tradition on which it is based. Data for these three parameters should be read together, as the three are often interlinked (initiatives aimed at improving one may affect another).

The Scoreboard presents indicators concerning mainly civil, commercial and administrative cases, and, subject to the availability of data, certain criminal cases (i.e. cases concerning money laundering and bribery at first instance courts). Its aim is to assist Member States in their efforts to create an efficient, investment-friendly environment which works in the interest of both business and the public. The Scoreboard is a comparative tool which evolves in the course of dialogue with Member States and the European Parliament ([6]). Its objective is to assess the essential parameters of an effective justice system and to provide relevant annual data.

What is the methodology of the EU Justice Scoreboard?

The Scoreboard uses a range of information sources. The Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), with which the Commission has concluded a contract to carry out a specific annual study, provides much of the quantitative data. The data cover 2014-2023, and have been provided by Member States in line with the CEPEJ's methodology. The study also provides detailed comments and country-specific factsheets that give more context. They should be read together with the figures ([7]).

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[5] https://commission.europa.eu/publications/2024-rule-law-report-communication-and-country-chapters_en

[6] E.g. European Parliament resolution of 29 May 2018 on the 2017 EU Justice Scoreboard (P8_TA(2018)0216).

[7] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/eu-justice-scoreboard_en

Data on the length of proceedings collected by the CEPEJ show the 'disposition time' – the estimated length of court proceedings (calculated as the ratio between pending and resolved cases over the course of a year). Data on courts' and administrative authorities' efficiency in applying EU law in specific areas show the average length of proceedings derived from the actual length of court cases. Note that the length of court proceedings may vary substantially between different regions in a Member State; cases may take particularly long in urban centres where the concentration of commercial activities may lead to a higher caseload.

Other data sources, covering the period from 2014 to 2024, are:

- the group of contact persons on national justice systems ([8]);
- the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ) ([9]);
- the Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the EU (NPSJC) ([10]);
- the Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Jurisdictions of the EU (ACA-Europe) ([11]);
- the Council of Bar and Law Societies in Europe (CCBE) ([12]);
- the European Competition Network (ECN) ([13]);
- the Network of First Instance Review Bodies on Public Procurement ([14]);
- the Communications Committee (COCOM) ([15]);
- the European Observatory on infringements of intellectual property rights ([16]);

[8] To help prepare the EU Justice Scoreboard and promote the exchange of best practice on the effectiveness of justice systems, the Commission asked Member States to designate two contact persons, one from the judiciary and one from the ministry of justice. This informal group meets regularly.

[9] The ENCJ brings together Member States' national institutions that are independent of the executive and legislature, and are responsible for supporting the judiciary in the independent delivery of justice: https://www.encj.eu/

[10] The NPSJC provides a forum that gives European institutions the opportunity to request the opinions of supreme courts, and brings them closer by encouraging discussion and the exchange of ideas: http://network-presidents.eu/

[11] ACA-Europe is composed of the Court of Justice of the EU and the Councils of State or the Supreme administrative jurisdictions of each EU Member State: https://www.aca-europe.eu/index.php/en/

[12] CCBE represents European bars and law societies in their common interests before European and other international institutions. It regularly acts as a liaison between its members and the European institutions, international organisations, and other legal organisations around the world: https://www.ccbe.eu/

[13] The ECN was set up as a forum for discussion and cooperation between European competition authorities in cases where Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) are applied. The ECN is the framework for close cooperation referred to in Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2003. Through the ECN, the Commission and the national competition authorities in all EU Member States cooperate with each other: http://ec.europa.eu/competition/ecn/index_en.html

[14] The Network of First Instance Review Bodies on Public Procurement was set up to strengthen cooperation between national first instance public procurement review bodies in the EU. The group's task is to advise the European Commission on matters related to the implementation of the Remedies Directives and the functioning of the national remedies systems. As a result of the evaluation of the effectiveness of Remedies Directives (COM(2017) 28 of 24 January 2017), the European Commission encourages first instance review bodies to cooperate to improve the exchange of information and good practice.

[15] The COCOM is composed of EU Member State representatives. Its main role is to provide an opinion on the draft measures that the Commission intends to adopt on digital market issues: https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/comitology-register/screen/committees/C15401/consult?lang=en

[16] The European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights is a network of experts and specialist stakeholders. It is composed of public and private sector representatives, who collaborate in active working groups: https://euipo.europa.eu/ohimportal/en/web/observatory/home

- the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network (CPC) ([17]);
- the Expert Group on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (EGMLTF) ([18]);
- Eurostat ([19]);
- the national contact points in the fight against corruption ([20]);
- the Network of Public Prosecutors or equivalent institutions at the Supreme Judicial Courts of the Member States of the European Union (NADAL Network) ([21]); and
- the Contact Committee on Supreme Audit Institutions ([22]).

Over the years, the Scoreboard methodology has been further developed and refined in close cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems, particularly through the use of a questionnaire (updated annually) and by collecting data on certain aspects of the functioning of justice systems.

The availability of data, in particular for indicators on the efficiency of justice systems, continues to improve. This is because many Member States have invested in their capacity to produce better judicial statistics. Where difficulties in gathering or providing data persist, this is due either to insufficient statistical capacity or to lack of exact correspondence between the national categories for which data are collected and the ones used for the Scoreboard. Only in very few cases is the data gap due to a lack of contributions from national authorities. The Commission continues to encourage Member States to further reduce this data gap.

How does the EU Justice Scoreboard feed into the European Semester and how is it related to the Recovery and Resilience Facility?

The Scoreboard provides data for assessing the efficiency, quality and independence of national justice systems. In doing so, it aims to help Member States make their national justice systems more effective. By comparing information on Member States' justice systems, the Scoreboard makes it easier to identify best practices and shortcomings and to keep track of challenges and progress made. In the context of the European Semester, country-specific assessments are carried out through a bilateral dialogue with the national authorities and the stakeholders concerned. Where the shortcomings identified have macroeconomic significance, the European Semester analysis may lead to the Commission proposing to the Council to adopt country-specific recommendations to improve the national justice systems in individual Member States ([23]).

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[17] The CPC is a network of national authorities responsible for enforcing EU consumer protection laws in EU and EEA countries: https://commission.europa.eu/live-work-travel-eu/consumer-rights-and-complaints/enforcement-consumer-protection/consumer-protection-cooperation-network_en

[18] The EGMLTF meets regularly to share views and help the Commission define policy and draft new anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing legislation: https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=2914

[19] Eurostat is the statistical office of the EU: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/

[20] The Commission maintains an informal group of contact persons dealing with the fight against corruption. See also https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/democracy-eu-citizenship-anti-corruption/anti-corruption/eu-network-against-corruption_en

[21] https://attorneygeneral.mt/activities/nadal-network-conference/

[22] The Contact Committee brings together the heads of the supreme audit institutions of the Member States and the European Court of Auditors and provides a forum for discussing and enhancing cooperation in audit and related activities. https://www.eca.europa.eu/sites/CC/en/pages/about.aspx

[23] In the context of the European Semester, the Council, on the basis of the Commission's proposal, addressed country-specific recommendations on their justice systems to seven Member States in 2019 (HR, IT, CY, HU, MT, PT and SK) and eight Member States in 2020 (HR, IT, CY, HU, MT, PL, PT and SK). There were no country-specific recommendations in 2021 due to the ongoing RRF processes. In 2022, there were two Member States (PL and HU) with country-specific recommendations related to judicial independence. In 2024, one Member State had

The Recovery and Resilience Facilty (RRF) has made available more than EUR 650 billion in loans and non-repayable financial support, of which each Member State would need to allocate a minimum of 20% to the digital transition and a minimum of 37% to measures contributing to climate objectives. So far, the reforms and investments proposed by Member States have exceeded these targets, with an estimated digital expenditure at 26% and climate expenditure at about 42%. The RRF offers an opportunity to address country-specific recommendations related to national justice systems and to accelerate national efforts to complete the digital transformation of justice systems. Payments to Member States under the performance-based RRF are contingent on the fulfilment of milestones and targets. Around 7 100 milestones and targets were proposed, of which about two thirds are related to investments and one third to reforms. Under the RRF Regulation, before their adoption, the Commission had to assess whether the Member States' recovery and resilience plans (RRPs) could contribute to effectively addressing all or a significant number of challenges identified in the relevant country-specific recommendations or challenges identified in other Commission documents adopted in the context of the European Semester ([24]). Following pre-financing payments as well as payment requests by the Member States and positive assessments by the Commission on the satisfactory fulfilment of the respective milestones and targets ([25]), a total of EUR 308.04 billion in RRF grants and loans have been disbursed to the Member States until May 2025. In the same timeframe, the fulfilment of 71% of milestones and targets remains to be assessed by the Commission.

Why are effective justice systems important for an investment-friendly business environment?

Effective justice systems that uphold the rule of law have a positive economic impact. The respect for the rule of law ensures a business environment in which laws apply effectively and uniformly, where businesses can operate in another Member State on an equal footing with local companies. The rule of law is central to the functioning of the single market and to maintaining a stable operating environment that gives the EU and its Member States a global competitive edge ([26]). Effective justice systems are also particularly relevant in the context of the European Semester and the RRF. Where judicial systems guarantee the enforcement of rights, creditors are more likely to lend, transaction costs are reduced and businesses are more likely to invest, have higher confidence and are dissuaded from opportunistic behaviour. In fact, an effective justice system is vital for sustained economic growth. It can improve the business climate, foster innovation, attract foreign direct investment, secure tax revenues and support economic growth. The benefits of well-functioning national justice systems for the economy are confirmed by a wide-range of studies ([27]),

a country-specific recommendation related to the effectiveness, independence and integrity of the judicial and anti-corruption system (SK).

[24] Article 19(3)(b) and Article 24(3) and (5) of Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility, OJ L 57, 18.2.2021, p. 17.

[25] The EU Justice Scoreboard is one of the sources of information feeding into the European Semester. This information does not prejudge the Commission's assessments of the satisfactory fulfilment of milestones and targets under the RRF.

[26] A Competitiveness Compass for the EU, COM(2025) 30 final, p. 19, The 2025 Annual Single Market and Competitiveness Report, COM(2025) 26 final, p. 3.

[27] "Justice and finance: Does judicial efficiency contribute to financial system efficiency?" (2024) Muhammad Atif Khan, Muhammad Asif Khan, Mohammed Arshad Khan, Shahid Hussain, Veronika Fenyves: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214845023001709 ; Chemin, M., 2020. "Judicial efficiency and firm productivity: Evidence from a world database of judicial reforms," The Review of Economics and Statistics 102(1): p. 49–64, https://direct.mit.edu/rest/article/102/1/49/58536/Judicial-Efficiency-and-Firm-Productivity-Evidence ; Kapopoulos, P. and Rizos, A., 2024. "Judicial efficiency and economic growth: Evidence based on European Union data," Scottish Journal of Political Economy 71(1): p. 101-131, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/sjpe.12357?msockid=1a8244b340af65701f02511641c36474

including by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ([28]), the European Central Bank (ECB) ([29]), the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary ([30]), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ([31]), the World Economic Forum ([32]), and the World Bank ([33]).

One study found a strong correlation between a reduction in the length of court proceedings (measured in disposition time ([34])) and the growth rate of companies ([35]). In addition, according to the study, a higher percentage of companies perceiving the justice system as independent correlates with higher firm turnover and greater productivity growth ([36]).

Other surveys have highlighted the importance of an effective national justice system for companies's investment decisions and ability to solve intellectual property rights conflicts. For example, in one survey, 93% of large companies replied that they systematically and continuously review the rule of law conditions (including judicial independence) in the countries they invest in ([37]). In another survey, over half of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) replied that high costs and lengthy judicial proceedings were the main reasons for not starting court proceedings over the infringement of intellectual property rights ([38]). The importance of effective justice systems for the functioning of the single market, in particular for businesses, is also stressed in the Commission's communications *Identifying and addressing barriers to the single market* ([39]) and *Single market enforcement action plan* ([40]).

28 IMF, Regional Economic Outlook, November 2017, *Europe: Europe Hitting its Stride,* p. xviii, pp. 40, 70: https://www.imf.org/~/media/Files/Publications/REO/EUR/2017/November/eur-booked-print.ashx?la=en

29 ECB, 'Structural policies in the euro area', June 2018, ECB Occasional Paper Series No 210: https://www.ecb.europa.eu/pub/pdf/scpops/ecb.op210.en.pdf?3db9355b1d1599799aa0e475e5624651

30 European Network of Councils for the Judiciary and the Montaigne Centre for the Rule of Law and Administration of Justice of Utrecht University, 'Economic value of the judiciary – A pilot study for five countries on volume, value and duration of large commercial cases', June 2021: https://pgwrk-websitemedia.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/production/pwk-web-encj2017-p/Reports/Economic%20value%20of%20te%20judiciary%20-%20pilot%20study.pdf

31 See e.g. 'What makes civil justice effective?' OECD Economics Department Policy Notes, No 18, June 2013 and 'The Economics of Civil Justice: New Cross-Country Data and Empirics', OECD Economics Department Working Papers, No 1060, August 2013.

32 World Economic Forum, 'The Global Competitiveness Report 2019', October 2019: https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-competitiveness-report-2019.

33 World Bank, 'World Development Report 2017: Governance and the Law, Chapter 3: The role of law', pp. 83, 140: http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2017

34 The 'disposition time' indicator is the number of unresolved cases divided by the number of resolved cases at the end of a year multiplied by 365 (days). It is a standard indicator developed by the Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ): http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation/cepej/evaluation/default_en.asp

35 Vincenzo Bove and Leandro Elia, 'The judicial system and economic development across EU Member States', JRC Technical Report, EUR 28440 EN, Publications Office of the EU, Luxembourg, 2017: http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC104594/jrc104594__2017_the_judicial_system_and_economic_development_across_eu_member_states.pdf

36 *Idem.*

37 The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Risk and Return – Foreign Direct Investment and the Rule of Law', 2015 http://www.biicl.org/documents/625_d4_fdi_main_report.pdf, p. 22.

38 EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), Intellectual Property (IP) SME Scoreboard 2016: https://euipo.europa.eu/tunnel-web/secure/webdav/guest/document_library/observatory/documents/sme_scoreboard_study_2016/Executive-summary_en.pdf

39 COM(2020)93 and SWD(2020)54.

40 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *Long term action plan for better implementation and enforcement of single market rules*, COM(2020)94, in particular actions 4, 6 and 18.

How does the Commission support the implementation of good justice reforms through technical support?

Member States can draw on the Commission's technical support available through the Reform and Investment Task Force (SG REFORM) under the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) ([41]). The aim of the TSI is to provide the requesting Member States with technical support to strengthen their institutional and administrative capacity for designing and implementing reforms. From 2021 to 2025 TSI has funded 36 projects, which included 43 reforms, to support 20 Member States to implement their justice reforms. TSI has been supporting projects aiming to improve the quality and effectiveness of justice, such as leveraging technology to better manage case workflows and take a data-driven approach to allocate caseload and resources, facilitating access to justice for vulnerable groups, and enhancing the capacities of prosecution authorities for effective litigation of high profile and cross-border corruption cases. The 2025 TSI call for proposal provided the platform for Members States to apply for support on digitalisation reforms like using technology to address mass litigation challenges and automate routine tasks to reduce manual effort and error, so that judges and administrative staff can focus on the more demanding tasks. The TSI also complements other instruments, namely the RRF, since it can support Member States in the implementation of their recovery and resilience plans (RRPs). The RRPs include actions on improving the effectiveness of justice, namely by digitalisation, reduction of backlogs, improvement of courts' and cases' management, and judicial map reform.

How does the justice programme support the effectiveness of justice systems?

With a total budget of around EUR 305 million for 2021-2027, the justice programme supports the further development of the European area of Justice based on the rule of law including the independence, quality and efficiency of the justice system, based on mutual recognition and mutual trust, and on judicial cooperation. In 2024, around EUR 41.2 million were provided to fund projects and other activities under the three specific objectives of the programme:

- EUR 11.1 million were provided to promote judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters; contribute to the effective and coherent application and enforcement of EU instruments; and support Member States' connection to the European Criminal Records Information System-Third Country Nationals (ECRIS-TCN);
- EUR 15.9 million were provided for training of legal professionals on EU civil, criminal and fundamental rights law, legal systems of the Member States and the rule of law;
- EUR 14.2 million were provided to promote access to justice (including e-Justice); protect victims' rights and the rights of persons suspected or accused of crime; and support the development and use of digital tools and the maintenance and extension of the e-Justice portal (jointly with the Digital Europe programme).

Why does the Commission monitor the digitalisation of national justice systems?

The digitalisation of justice is key to increasing the effectiveness of justice systems and a highly efficient tool for facilitating access to justice and increasing the quality of justice. Digital tools also enhance judicial

[41] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/tsi
The TSI Regulation was adopted in March 2021. According to its Article 5, the aim is to support 'institutional reform and efficient and service-oriented functioning of public administration and e-government, simplification of rules and procedures, auditing, enhancing capacity to absorb Union funds, promotion of administrative cooperation, **effective rule of law, reform of the justice systems**, capacity building of competition and antitrust authorities, strengthening of financial supervision and reinforcement of the fight against fraud, corruption and money laundering' (emphasis added).

cooperation. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, Member States accelerated modernisation reforms in this area. AI is also increasingly being used in the field of justice[42].

Since 2013, the EU Justice Scoreboard has included comparative information on the digitalisation of justice across the Member States, for example in the areas of online access to judgments or online claim submission and follow-up.

Regulation (EU) 2023/2844 on digitalisation of cross-border judicial cooperation in civil, commercial and criminal matters ([43]) entitles natural and legal persons to communicate electronically with the competent judicial authorities in the context of cross-border proceedings, as well as to pay court fees electronically. The Regulation also creates a legal basis for conducting videoconferencing in cross-border civil, commercial and criminal matters. A digital communication channel to be used for the exchange of data between the competent judicial authorities is also being set up. In this context, the Justice Scoreboard monitors the progress achieved by Member States in the implementation of the Regulation and the use of videoconferencing.

The data from the 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard will also feed into the forthcoming strategy on the use of digital technologies, to make EU civil and criminal justice systems more efficient, resilient and secure[44].

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[42] AI can contribute to a more efficient justice system by helping judges and justice professionals to focus on their substantive work. For example, AI has been used in following cases, document filing or handling of repetitive tasks, as well as research of legislation and case law.

[43] Regulation (EU) 2023/2844 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2023 on the digitalisation of judicial cooperation and access to justice in cross-border civil, commercial and criminal matters, and amending certain acts in the field of judicial cooperation, PE/50/2023/REV/1, OJ L, 2023/2844, 27.12.2023.

[44] https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14517-Digital-Justice-strategy-for-2025-2030_en

2. KEY FINDINGS OF THE 2025 EU JUSTICE SCOREBOARD

Efficiency, quality and independence are the main parameters of an effective justice system. The Scoreboard presents indicators for each of these parameters.

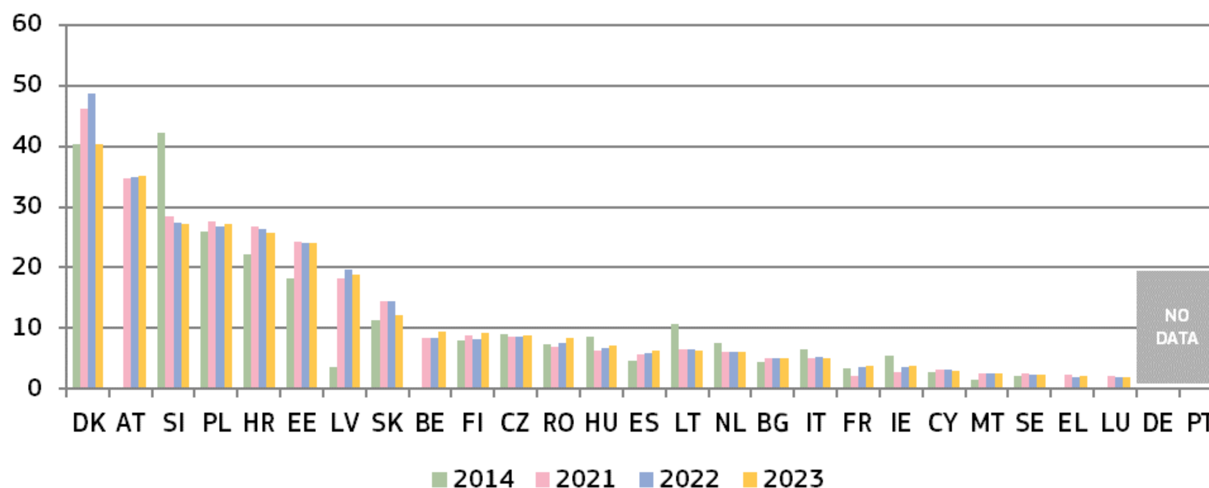
2.1. Efficiency of justice systems

The Scoreboard presents indicators for the efficiency of proceedings in the broad areas of civil, commercial and administrative cases and in specific areas where administrative authorities and courts apply EU law ([45]).

2.1.1. Developments in caseload

The caseload of national justice systems decreased in five Member States, in two of which by a large amount compared to the previous year. It increased or remained stable in 20 Member States. Overall, it continues to vary considerably between Member States (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of incoming civil, commercial, administrative and other cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(at first instance/per 100 inhabitants) (source: CEPEJ study ([46]))*

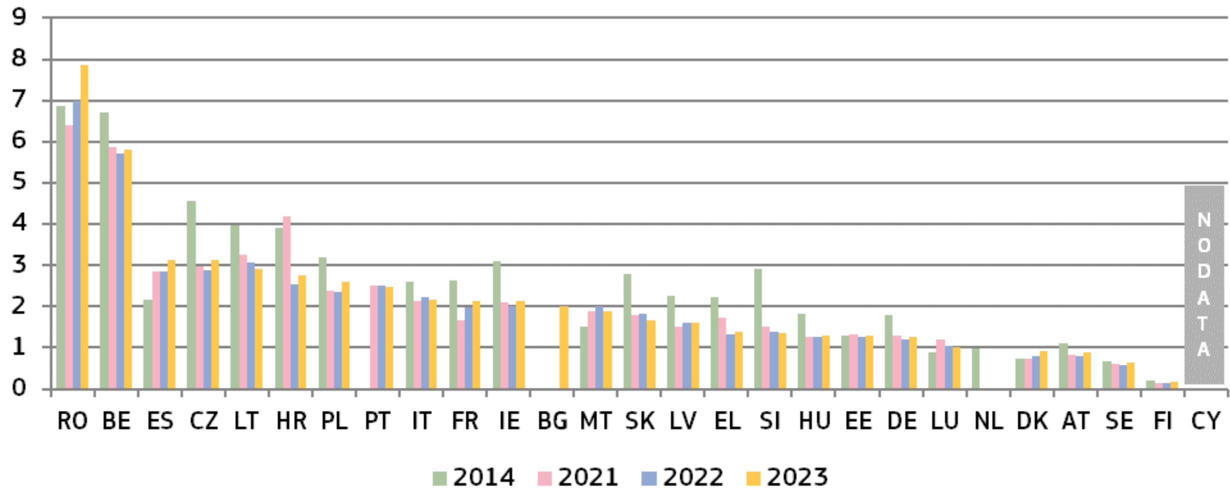


(*) Under the CEPEJ methodology, this category includes all civil and commercial litigious and non-litigious cases, non-litigious land and business registry cases, other registry cases, other non-litigious cases, administrative law cases and other non-criminal cases.

[45] The enforcement of court decisions is also important for the efficiency of a justice system. However, comparable data are not readily available. More details on the individual Member States' situation are presented in the 2024 study on the functioning of judicial systems in the EU Member States – country profiles, carried out by the CEPEJ Secretariat for the Commission: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/justice-and-fundamental-rights/effective-justice/eu-justice-scoreboard_en.

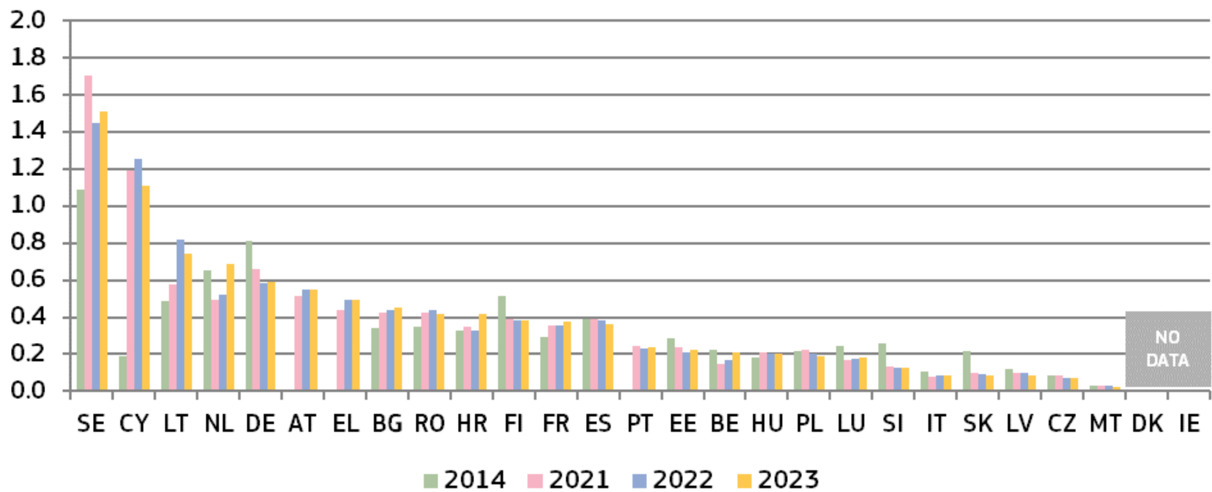
[46] 2024 study on the functioning of judicial systems in the EU Member States, carried out by the CEPEJ Secretariat for the Commission: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/eu-justice-scoreboard_en#documents

Figure 2: Number of incoming civil and commercial litigious cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(at first instance/per 100 inhabitants) (source: CEPEJ study)*



(*) Under the CEPEJ methodology, litigious civil/commercial cases concern disputes between parties, e.g. disputes about contracts. Non-litigious civil/commercial cases concern uncontested proceedings, e.g. uncontested payment orders.

Figure 3: Number of incoming administrative cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(at first instance/per 100 inhabitants) (source: CEPEJ study)*



*(*) Under the CEPEJ methodology, administrative law cases concern disputes between individuals and local, regional or national authorities. **DK** and **IE** do not record administrative cases separately. Methodology changes in **EL**, **SK** and **SE**.*

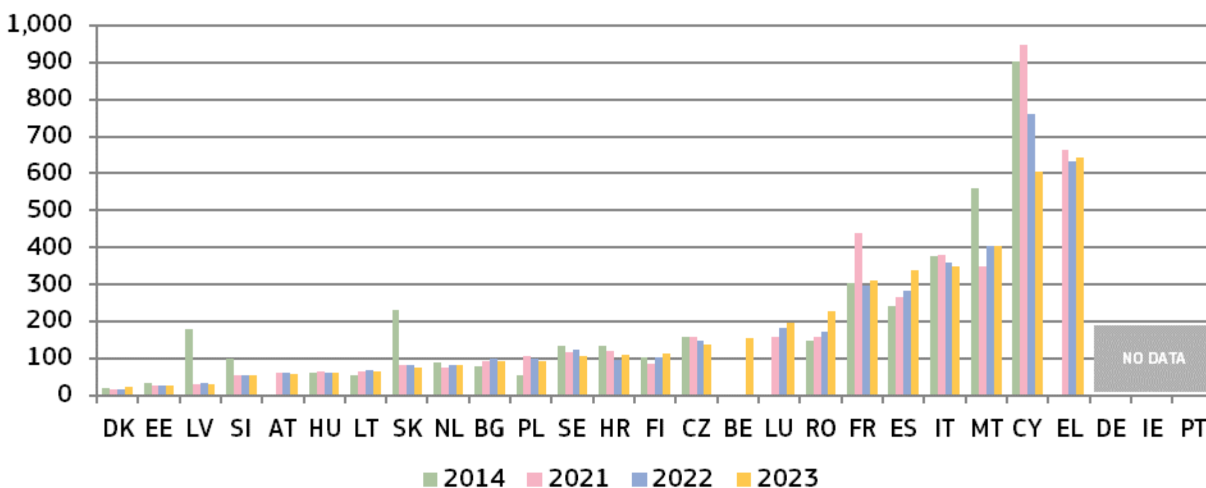
2.1.2. General data on efficiency

The indicators on the efficiency of proceedings in the broad areas of civil, commercial and administrative cases are: (i) estimated length of proceedings (disposition time), (ii) clearance rate, and (iii) number of pending cases.

– Estimated length of proceedings –

The estimated length of proceedings indicates the estimated time (in days) needed to resolve a case in court, meaning the time taken by the court to reach a decision at first instance. 'Disposition time' indicates the estimated minimum time that a court would need to resolve a case while maintaining its current working conditions. This indicator is calculated as the number of unresolved cases divided by the number of resolved cases at the end of a year multiplied by 365 (days) ([47]). The higher the value, the higher the probability that it takes the court longer to reach a decision. The data mostly concern proceedings at first instance courts and compare, where available, data for 2014, 2021, 2022 and 2023 ([48]). Figure 6 shows the disposition time in 2023 in civil and commercial litigious cases at all court instances, and Figure 8 for administrative cases at all court instances.

Figure 4: Estimated time needed to resolve civil, commercial, administrative and other cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(at first instance/in days) (source: CEPEJ study)*



*(*) Under the CEPEJ methodology, this category includes all civil and commercial litigious and non-litigious cases, non-litigious land and business registry cases, other registry cases, other non-litigious cases, administrative law cases and other non-criminal cases. Methodology changes in **SK**. Pending cases include all instances in **CZ** and, until 2016, in **SK**. For **LV**, the sharp decrease is due to court system reform, error checks and data clean-ups of the information system. In **PT**, the new Code of Civil Procedure which creates a new enforcement regime entered into force on 1 September 2013. It is based on a new paradigm, which states that court proceedings must be clearly distinguished from out-of-court proceedings. However, so far it has not been possible to adjust the collection of data accordingly and provide the necessary data for this Figure.*

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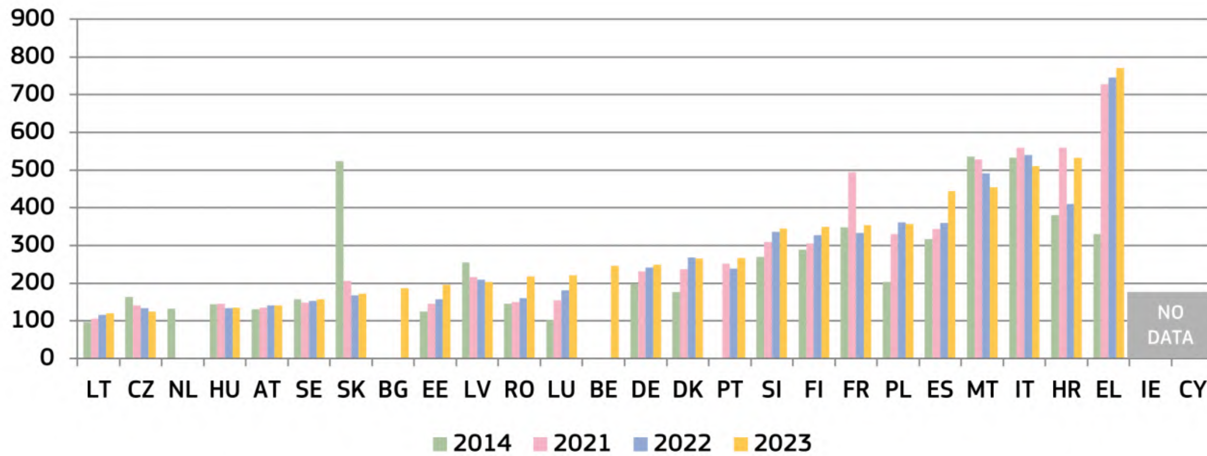
[47] Length of proceedings, clearance rate and number of pending cases are standard indicators defined by CEPEJ: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/cooperation/cepej/evaluation/default_en.asp.

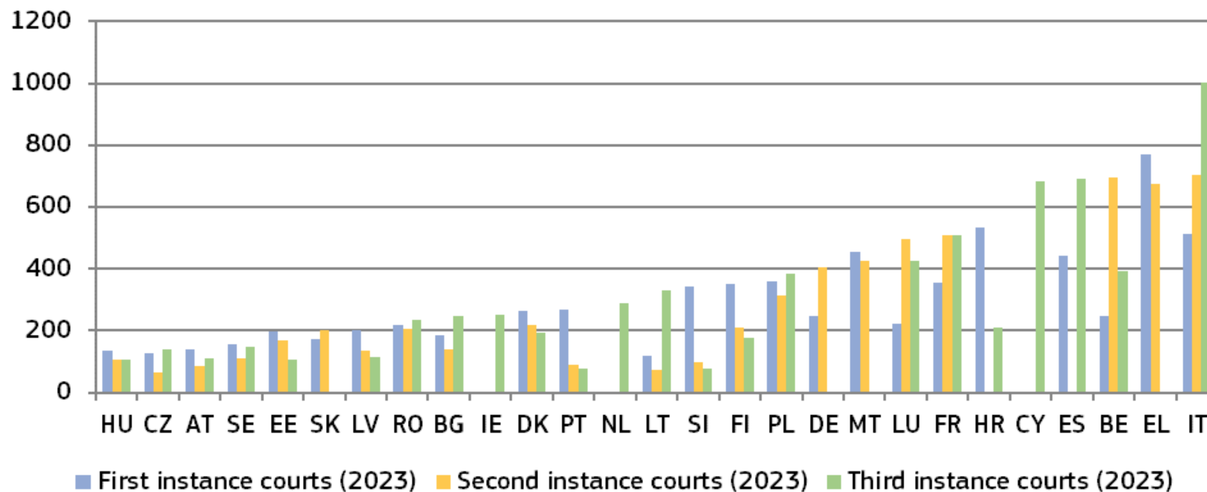
[48] The years were chosen to keep the nine-year perspective with 2014 as a baseline, while at the same time not overcrowding the figures. Data for 2010, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 are available in the CEPEJ report.

Figure 5: Estimated time needed to resolve litigious civil and commercial cases at first instance in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(at first instance/in days) (source: CEPEJ study)*



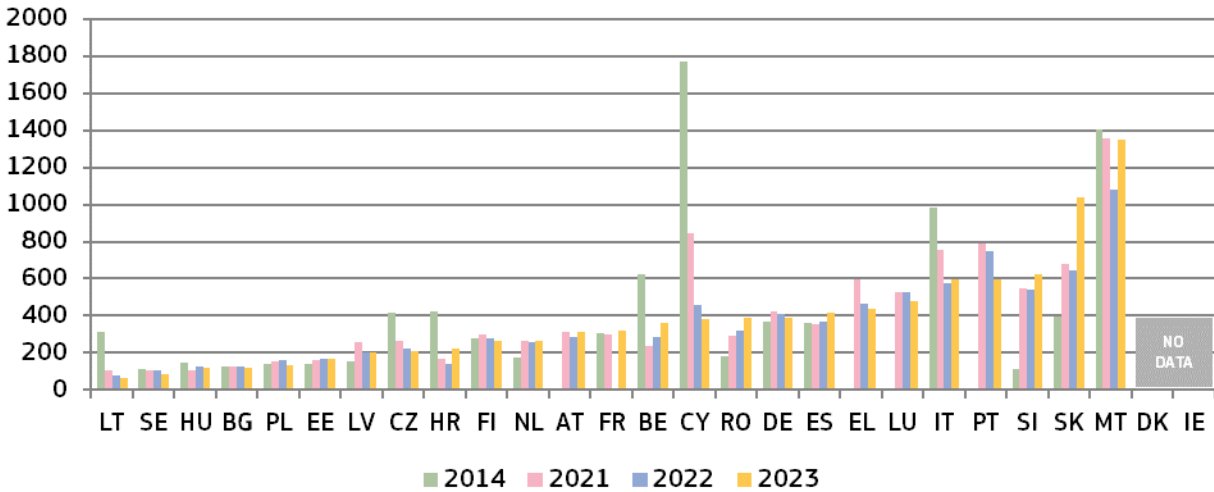
*(*) Under the CEPEJ methodology, litigious civil/commercial cases concern disputes between parties, e.g. disputes about contracts. Non-litigious civil/commercial cases concern uncontested proceedings, e.g. uncontested payment orders. Methodology changes in **EL** and **SK**. Pending cases include all instances in **CZ** and, up to 2016, in **SK**. For **IT**, the temporary slowdown of judicial activity due to strict restrictive measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic affected the disposition time. Data for **NL** include non-litigious cases.*

Figure 6: Estimated time needed to resolve litigious civil and commercial cases at all court instances in 2023 (*) *(at first, second and third instance/in days) (source: CEPEJ study)*



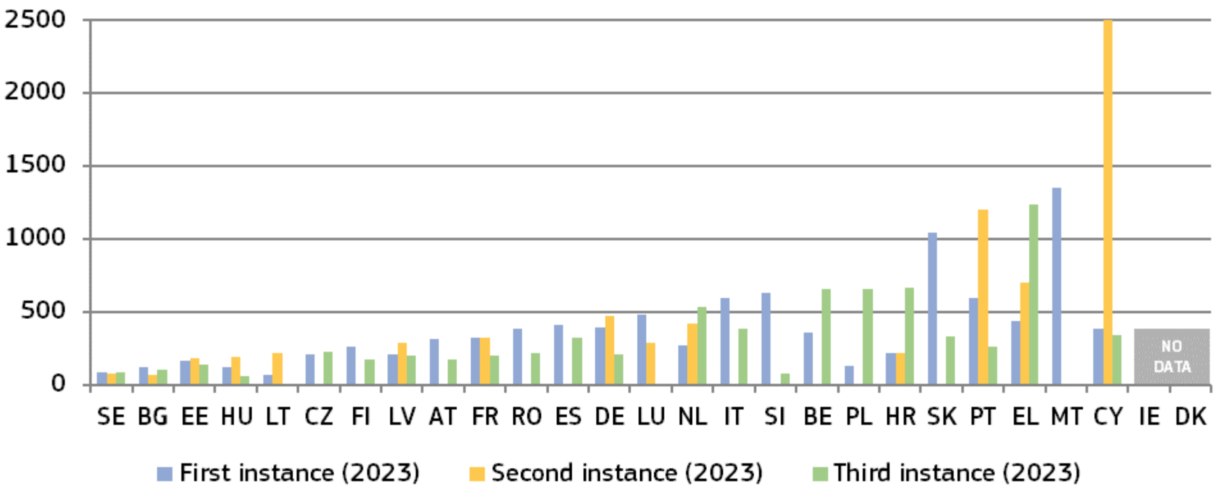
*(*) The order of Member States in the figure is determined by the court instance with the longest proceedings in each Member State. No data are available for first and second instance courts in **CY, NL** and **IE**, for second instance courts in **HR** and **ES** and for third instance courts in **EL** and **SK**. There is no third instance court in **DE** and **MT**. Access to a third instance court may be limited in some Member States.*

Figure 7: Estimated time needed to resolve __administrative cases at first instance in 2014, 2021 – 2023__ (*) *(at first instance/in days) (source: CEPEJ study)*



*(*) Under the CEPEJ methodology, administrative law cases concern disputes between individuals and local, regional or national authorities. Methodology changes in **EL** and **SK**. Pending cases include courts of all instances in **CZ** and, until 2016, in **SK**. **DK** and **IE** do not record administrative cases separately.*

Figure 8: Estimated time needed to resolve __administrative cases__ __at all court instances in 2023__ (*) *(first and, where applicable, second and third instance/in days) (source: CEPEJ study)*

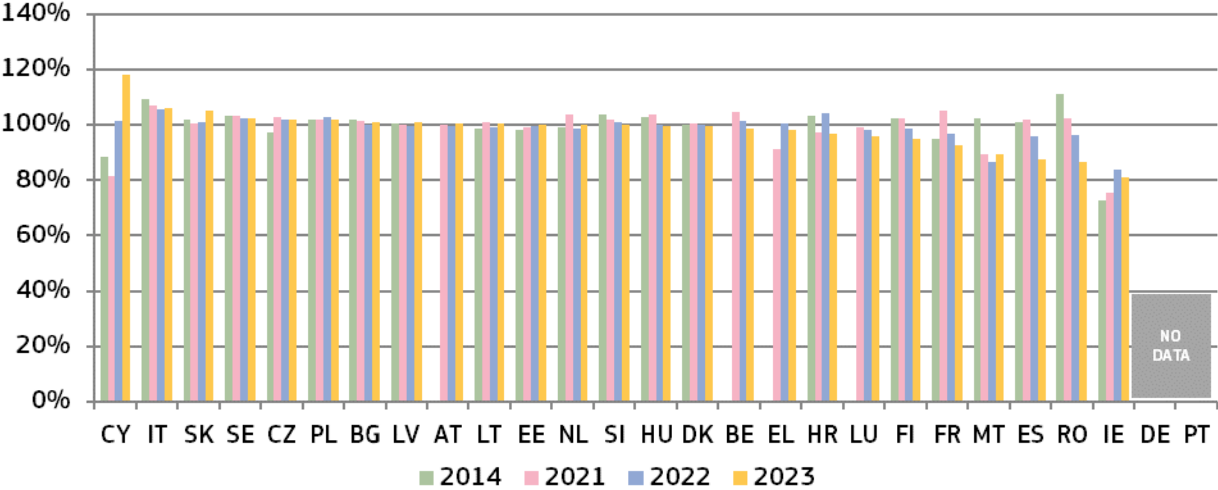


*(*) Values for some Member States have been reduced for presentation purposes (**CY** in second instance = 5.429). The order of Member States in the figure is determined by the court instance with the longest proceedings in each Member State. No data available for second instance courts in **BE**, **CZ**, **HU**, **MT**, **AT**, **PL**, **RO**, **SI**, **SK** and **FI**, for third instance courts in **LT**, **LU** and **MT**. The supreme, or other highest court, is the only appeal instance in **CZ**, **IT**, **AT**, **SI** and **FI**. There is no third instance court for these types of cases in **LT**, **LU** and **MT**. The highest administrative court is the first and only instance for certain cases in **BE**. Access to third instance courts may be limited in some Member States. **DK** and **IE** do not record administrative cases separately. In **CY**, the organisation of the justice system underwent a significant reform in July 2023, including the establishment of a Court of Appeals and a third instance.*

– Clearance rate –

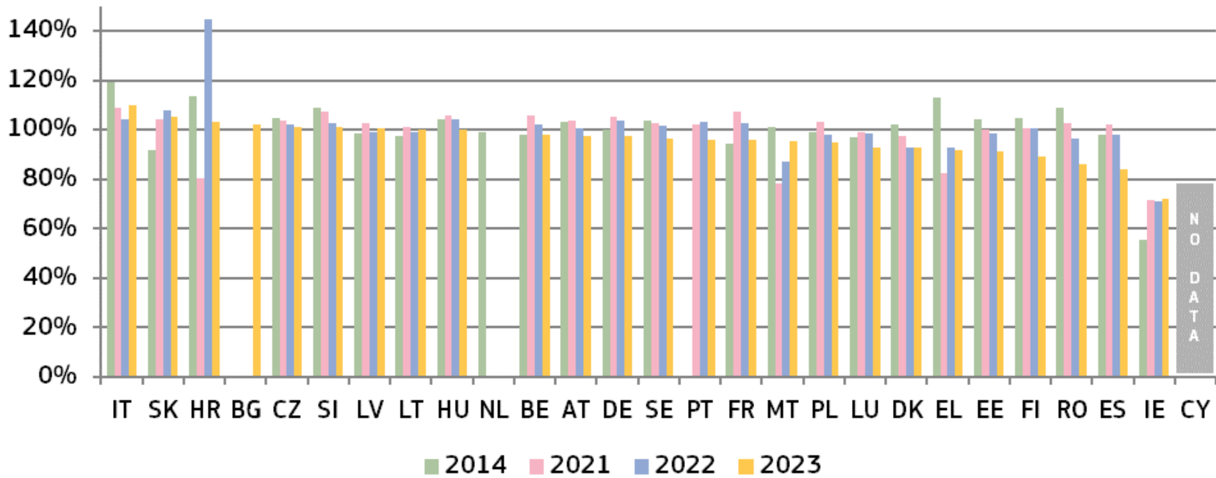
The clearance rate is the ratio of resolved cases to incoming cases. It measures whether a court is keeping up with its incoming caseload. When the clearance rate is around 100% or higher, it means that judicial system is able to resolve at least as many cases as come in. When the clearance rate is below 100%, it means that the courts are resolving fewer cases than the number of incoming cases.

Figure 9: Rate of resolving <u>civil, commercial, administrative and other cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023</u> (*) *(at first instance/in % — values higher than 100% indicate that more cases are resolved than come in, while values below 100% indicate that fewer cases are resolved than come in) (source: CEPEJ study)*



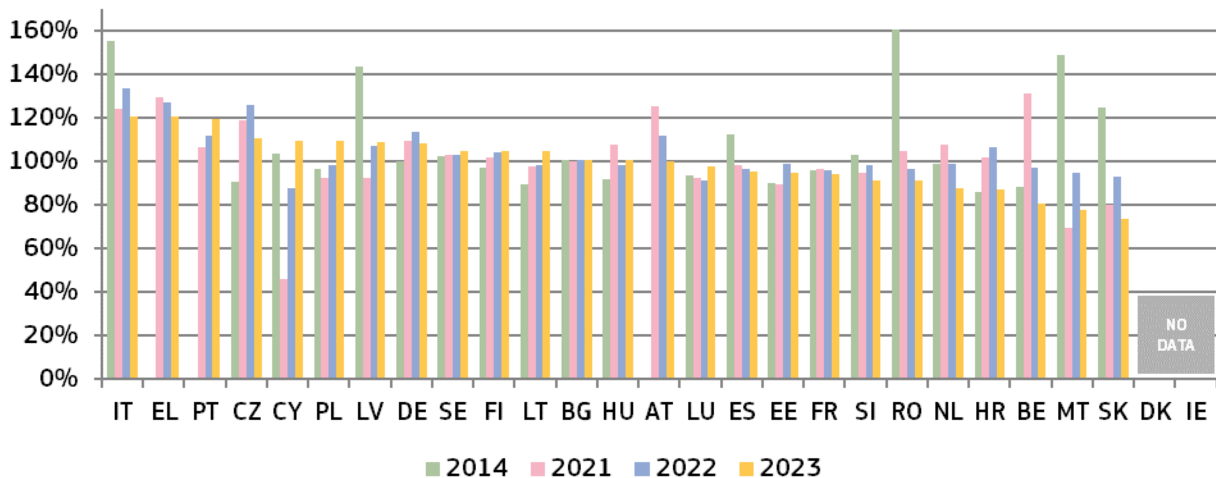
*(*) Under the CEPEJ methodology, this category includes all civil and commercial litigious and non-litigious cases, non-litigious land and business registry cases, other registry cases, other non-litigious cases, administrative law cases and other non-criminal cases. Methodology changes in **SK**. In **IE,** the number of resolved cases is expected to be underreported due to the methodology.*

Figure 10: Rate of resolving <u>litigious civil and commercial cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023</u> (*) *(at first instance/in %) (source: CEPEJ study)*



*(*) Methodology changes in **EL** and **SK**. In **IE,** the number of resolved cases is expected to be underreported due to the methodology. Data for **NL** include non-litigious cases.*

Figure 11: Rate of resolving <u>administrative cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023</u> (*) *(*at first *instance/in %) (source: CEPEJ study)*

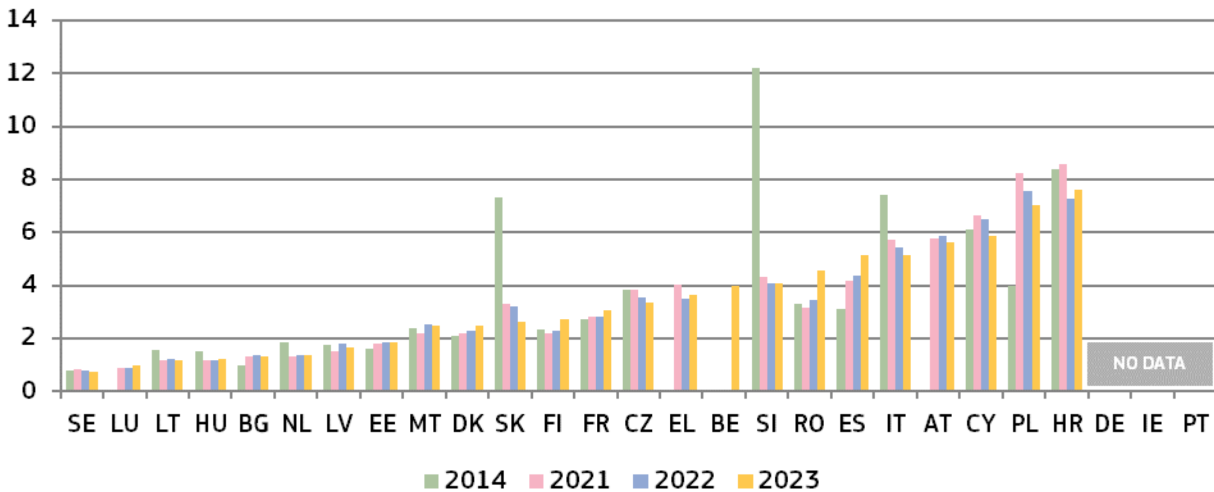


*(*)Methodology changes in **EL** and **SK**. **DK** and **IE** do not record administrative cases separately. In **CY**, the number of resolved cases has increased because cases were tried together, 2 724 consolidated cases were withdrawn and an administrative court was set up in 2015.*

– Pending cases –

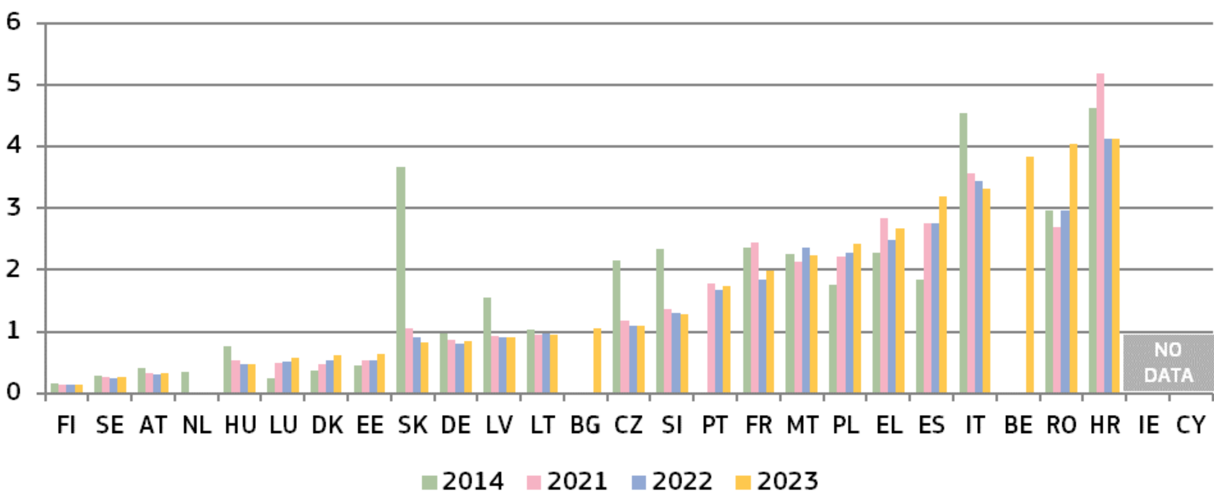
The number of pending cases is the number of cases that remains to be dealt with at the end of the year in question. It also affects disposition time.

Figure 12: Number of <u>pending civil, commercial and administrative and other cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023</u> (*) *(at first instance/per 100 inhabitants) (source: CEPEJ study)*



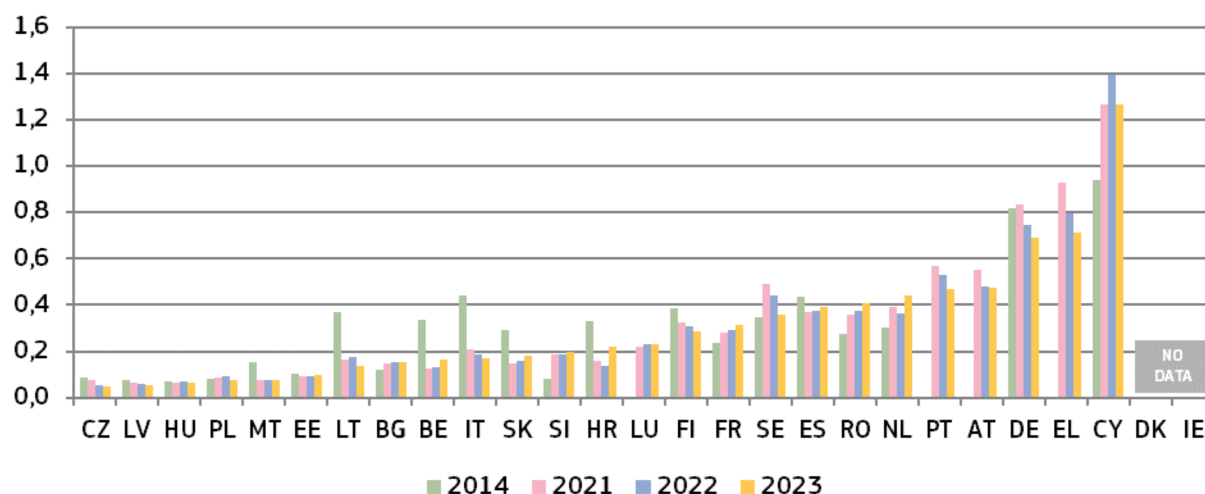
*(*) Under the CEPEJ methodology, this category includes all civil and commercial litigious and non-litigious cases, non-litigious land and business registry cases, other registry cases, other non-litigious cases, administrative law cases and other non-criminal cases. Methodology changes in **SK**. Pending cases include cases before courts of all instances in **CZ** and, until 2016, in **SK**.*

Figure 13: Number of <u>pending litigious civil and commercial cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023</u> (*) *(at first instance/per 100 inhabitants) (source: CEPEJ study)*



*(*) Methodology changes in **EL** and **SK**. Pending cases include cases before courts of all instances in **CZ** and, until 2016, in **SK**. Data for **NL** include non-litigious cases.*

Figure 14: Number of pending administrative cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(at first instance/per 100 inhabitants) (source: CEPEJ study)*



*(*) Methodology changes in **EL** and **SK**. Pending cases include cases before courts of all instances in **CZ** and, until 2016, in **SK**. **DK** and **IE** do not record administrative cases separately.*

2.1.3. Efficiency in specific areas of EU law

The data in this section complements the general data on the efficiency of justice systems. It shows the average length of proceedings ([49]) in specific areas of EU law. The 2025 Scoreboard builds on previous data for competition, electronic communications, the EU trademark, consumer law, anti-money laundering and anti-corruption.

The six areas of EU law were selected because of their relevance for the single market and the business environment. The overview of the efficiency of administrative authorities continues in this edition of the Scoreboard, with updated figures on the areas of competition and consumer protection. In general, long delays in judicial and administrative proceedings may have negative impacts on rights stemming from EU law e.g. when appropriate remedies are no longer available or serious financial damages become irrecoverable. For businesses in particular, administrative delays and uncertainty in some cases can lead to significant costs and undermine planned or existing investments ([50]).

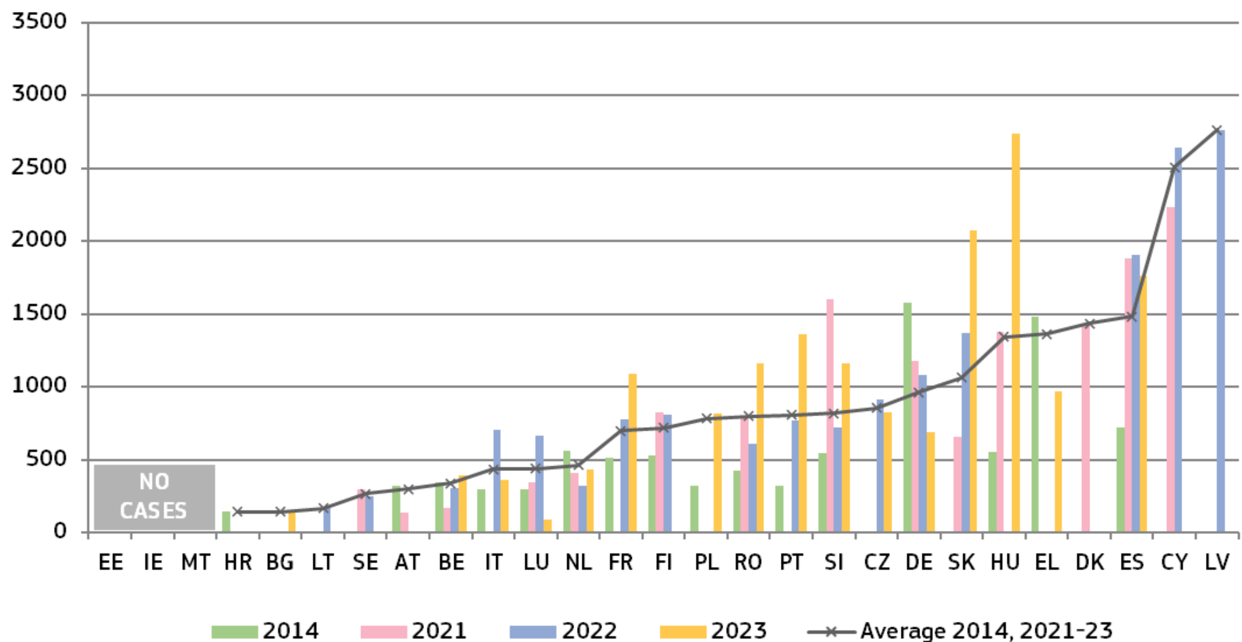
[49] The length of proceedings in specific areas is calculated in calendar days, counting from the day on which an action or appeal was lodged before the court (or the indictment became final) until the day on which the court adopted its decision (Figures 15-22). Values are ranked based on a weighted average of data for 2014 and 2021-2023 for Figures 15, 17, 18 and 19, and for 2014 and 2021-2023 for Figures 20 and 21. For Figure 16, data cover 2021-2023. For Figure 22, the data cover 2021-2023. Where data were not available for all years, the average reflects the available data presented in the chart, calculated based on all cases, a sample of cases or, in very few countries, estimations.

[50] Figure 18 of the Retention and Expansion of Foreign Direct Investment, Political Risk and Policy Responses, 2019 the World Bank Group.

– Competition –

The effective enforcement of competition law is essential for an attractive business environment, as it ensures a level playing field for businesses. It promotes economic initiative and efficiency, and leads to a wider choice for consumers, lower prices and better quality. Figure 15 presents the average length of cases brought against decisions of national competition authorities applying Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) ([51]). Figure 16 presents the average length of proceedings before the national competition authorities applying Articles 101 and 102 of the TFEU.

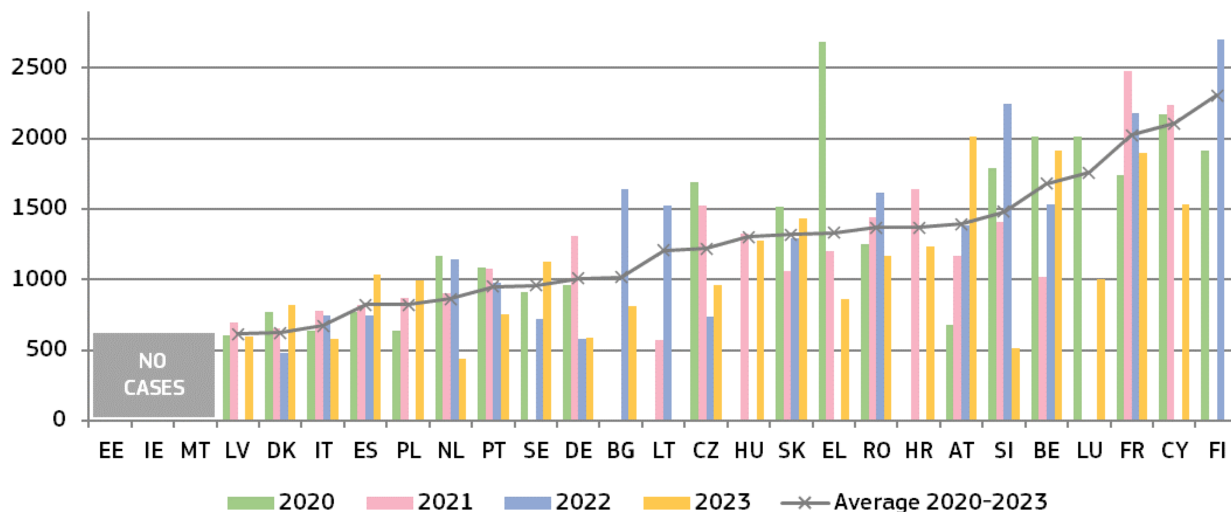
Figure 15: Competition: average length of judicial review in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(at first instance/in days) (source: European Commission with the European Competition Network)*



*(*) The average is weighted by the number of cases in the respective year. **AT**: data for 2014 and 2021 include decisions of the Cartel Court on the substance, not the judicial review of these decisions by the Supreme Court. Since the 2024 EU Justice Scoreboard, the decisions of the Cartel Court are included in the length of proceedings before the national competition authorities (see below). **IT:** an estimation of length was used for 2014, 2021 and 2022. An empty column can indicate that the Member State reported no cases for the year in question. The number of cases is low (below five a year) in many Member States. This can cause the annual data to rely heavily on one case that is exceptionally long or short (e.g. in. **LU** where there was only one case). **ES:** The number of appeals corresponds to the number of companies that filed an appeal against each CNMC' decision. **IE:** Not applicable for 2020, 2021 and 2022, as prior to 2023 the CCPC was not empowered to make decisions of the relevant type capable of being judicially reviewed.*

[51] See Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2003 of 16 December 2002 on the implementation of the rules on competition laid down in Articles 81 and 82 of the Treaty (Text with EEA relevance), OJ L 1, 4.1.2003, p. 1-25, in particular Articles 3 and 5.

Figure 16: Competition: average length of proceedings before the national competition authorities in 2021-2023 (*) *(in days) (source: European Commission with the European Competition Network)*



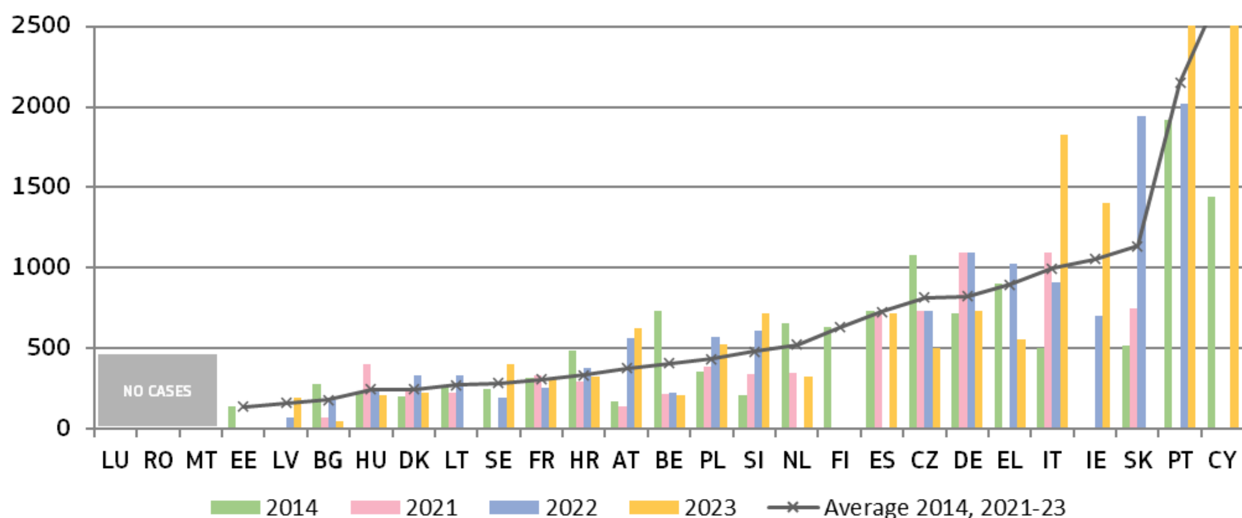
(*) The average is weighted by the number of cases in the respective year. Since the 2024 EU Justice Scoreboard, the average length of proceedings before the national competition authorities has been calculated as follows: the number of days between the first formal investigative measure and the adoption of a final decision by the national competition authority (by the administrative authority or, in Member States with a judicial system, by the court that has the power to adopt a prohibition decision and/or impose or confirm fines). For this reason, the data since the 2024 edition in the above figure cannot be compared to the data published in earlier editions. This calculation method allows for comparable data at EU level for the sole purpose of the EU Justice Scoreboard and may differ from the reporting at national level in certain Member States. ***CZ*** *and* ***SK*** *have a two-instances administrative procedure. When appealed, first instances decisions are reviewed by the second instance body of the authority, which may prolong proceedings.* ***DK****: In 2021, following the transposition of the ECN+ Directive, Denmark moved from a purely criminal enforcement system to a system where the Danish competition authority can now directly apply for the imposition of a fine before a civil court and adopt settlement decisions in its own administrative proceedings. This led to an increase of decisions since 2022. For* ***AT, DK*** *and* ***FI****, the length of proceedings covers the combined duration of proceedings before the administrative and judicial national competition authorities.* ***AT****: data include proceedings relating to a large scale cartel in the construction sector. Due to the size of this case, proceedings triggered by the same first investigative measure were (and still are being) led and concluded successively, gradually distorting the average length of proceedings.* ***ES*** *and* ***IT****: data excludes commitment decisions adopted by the national competition authority.* ***IE:*** *Not applicable for 2020, 2021 and 2022, as the CCPC did not have the power to make its own binding administrative decisions in antitrust cases until September 2023 (prior to that date, it could only take enforcement action in such cases through the courts).*

– Electronic communications –

The objective of EU electronic communications legislation is to encourage competition, contribute to the development of the single market and generate investment, innovation and growth. The positive effects for consumers can be achieved through effective enforcement of this legislation which can lead to lower prices for end users and better quality services. Figure 17 presents the average length of judicial review cases against the decisions of national regulatory authorities

applying EU law on electronic communications ([52]). It covers a broad range of cases, from more complex 'market analysis' reviews to more straightforward consumer-focused issues.

Figure 17: Electronic communications: average length of judicial review in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(first instance/in days) (source: European Commission with the Communications Committee)*



(*) *Values for some Member States have been reduced for presentation purposes (**PT** in 2023 = 2.830; **CY** in 2023 = 3.285). The average is weighted by the number of cases in the respective year. The number of cases varies from one Member State to another. An empty column indicates that the Member State reported no cases for the year. Sometimes, the limited number of relevant cases (**CZ, DK, IE, ES, LV, AT, PT**) can cause the annual data to rely heavily on a single case that is exceptionally long or short; this may result in wide variations in the data from one year to the next. In **DK**, a quasi-judicial body is in charge of first instance appeals. In **ES**, **AT**, and **PL**, different courts are in charge depending on the subject matter.*

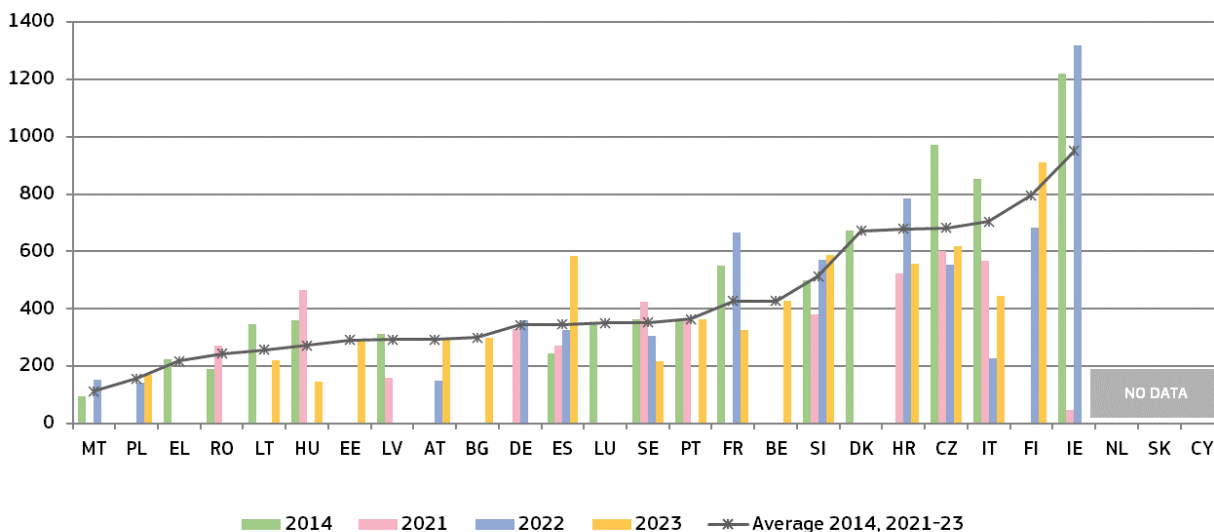
– EU trademark –

Effective enforcement of intellectual property rights is essential to stimulate investment in innovation. EU legislation on EU trademarks ([53]) gives the national courts a significant role to play, empowering them to act as EU courts and take decisions that affect the single market. Figure 18 shows the average length of EU trademark infringement cases in litigation between private parties.

[52] The calculation was made based on the length of appeal cases against national regulatory authority decisions applying national laws that implement the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications (Directives 2002/19/EC (Access Directive), Directive 2002/20/EC (Authorisation Directive), Directive 2002/21/EC (Framework Directive), Directive 2002/22/EC (Universal Service Directive), as well as other relevant EU law such as the radio spectrum policy programme and Commission spectrum decisions, excluding Directive 2002/58/EC on privacy and electronic communications.

[53] Regulation (EU) 2017/1001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2017 on the European Union trademark (OJ L 154, 16.62017, p. 1-99).

Figure 18: <u>EU trademark</u>: average length of EU trademark infringement cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(at first instance/in days) (source: European Commission with the European Observatory on infringements of intellectual property rights)*



*(*) The average is weighted by the number of cases in the respective year. **FR**, **IT**, **LT**, **LU**: A sample of cases used for data for certain years. **DK**: Data from all trademark cases (not only EU) in commercial and maritime high courts; for 2023, 372 cases concerning intellectual property law were finalised. 53 were regular civil cases, 275 were handled as small claim procedures and 44 were prohibition proceedings and injunction proceedings. The information on the case processing times is not available. **EL:** Data based on weighted average length from two courts. **ES**: Cases concerning other EU IP titles are included in the calculation of average length. **PL**: For 2023, the weighted average was calculated on the basis of number of cases resolved. **FI**: For 2023, a preliminary ruling from the Court of Justice was requested in one of the two cases. The time during which the case was pending before the Court of Justice was included in the calculation of the average number of days.*

– Consumer protection –

Effective enforcement of consumer law ensures that consumers' rights are protected and that companies infringing consumer laws do not gain an unfair advantage. Consumer protection authorities and courts play a key role in enforcing EU consumer law ([54]) within the various national enforcement systems. Figure 19 illustrates the average length of judicial review cases against decisions of consumer protection authorities applying EU law.

For consumers or companies, effective enforcement can involve a chain of actors, which includes not only courts but also administrative authorities. To shed more light on this enforcement chain, the length of proceedings before consumer authorities is presented. Figure 20 shows the average length of time it took for administrative decisions to be reached by national consumer protection authorities in 2014 and 2021-2023. Decisions include: establishment of infringements of substantive rules, interim measure, cease and desist orders, initiation of court proceedings and case closure.

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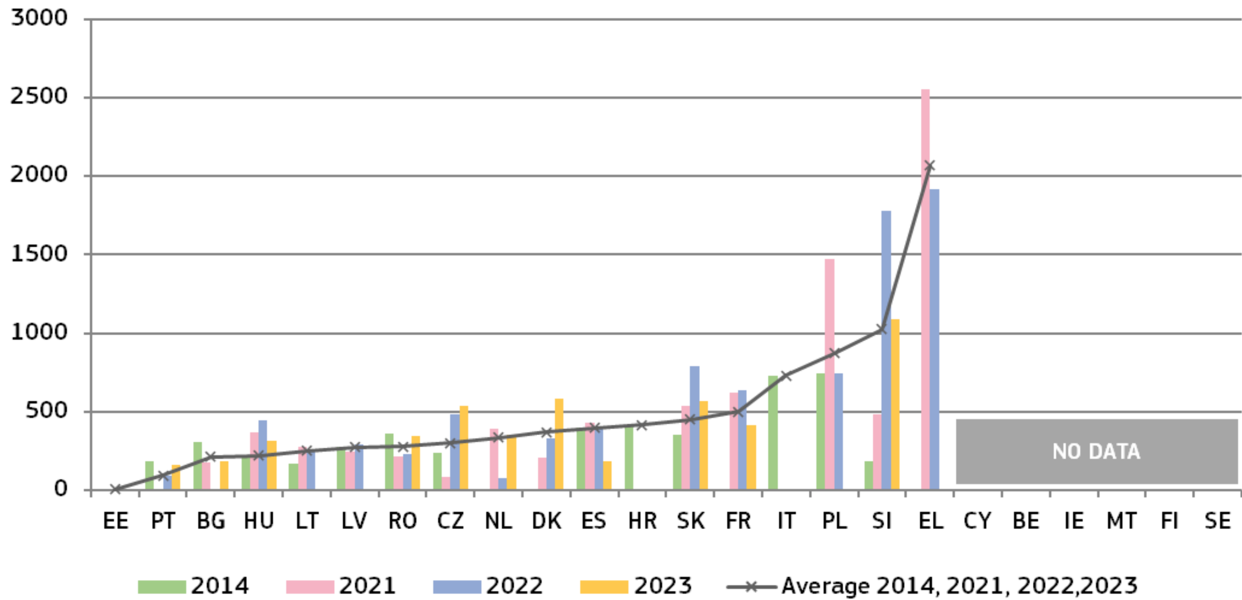
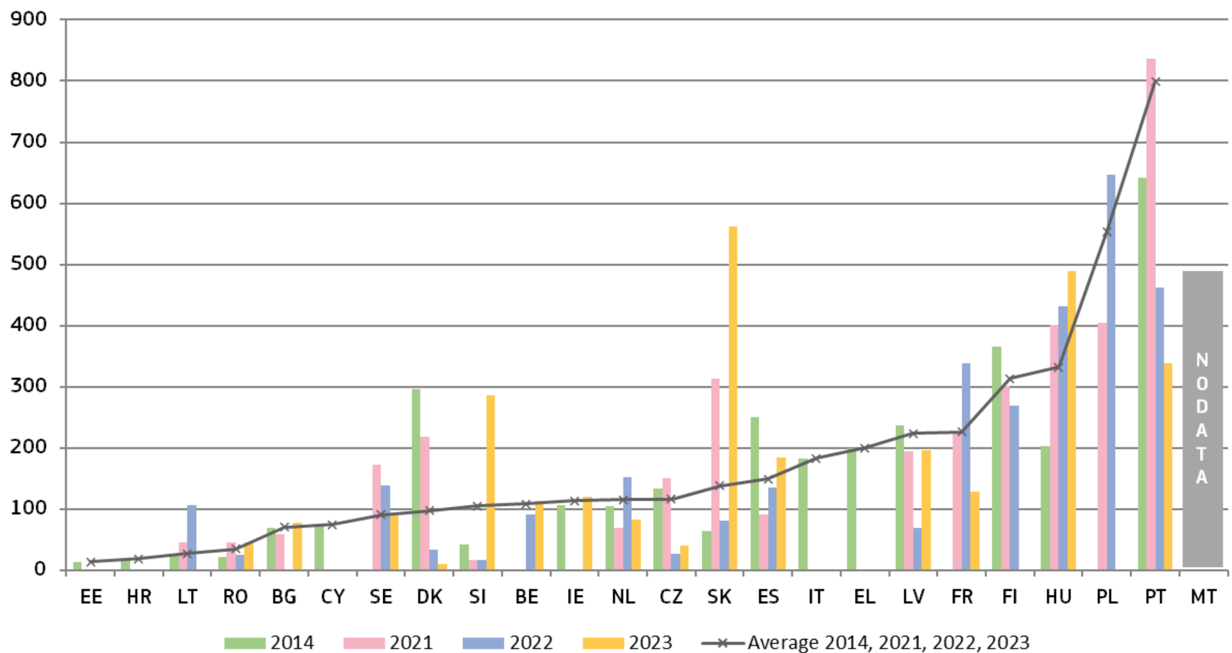
[54] Figures 20 and 21 relate to the enforcement of the Unfair Terms Directive (93/13/EEC), the Consumer Sales and Guarantees Directive (1999/44/EC), the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (2005/29/EC) and the Consumer Rights Directive (2011/83/EC), and their national implementing provisions.

Figure 19: Consumer protection: average length of judicial review in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(first instance/in days) (source: European Commission with the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network)*



(*) The average is weighted by the number of cases in the respective year. ***DE, LU, AT****: scenario is not applicable as consumer authorities are not empowered to decide on infringements of the relevant consumer rules.. An estimate of average length was provided by* ***EL*** *and* ***RO*** *for certain years.*

Figure 20: Consumer protection: average length of administrative decisions by consumer protection authorities in 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(first instance/in days) (source: European Commission with the Consumer Protection Cooperation Network)*

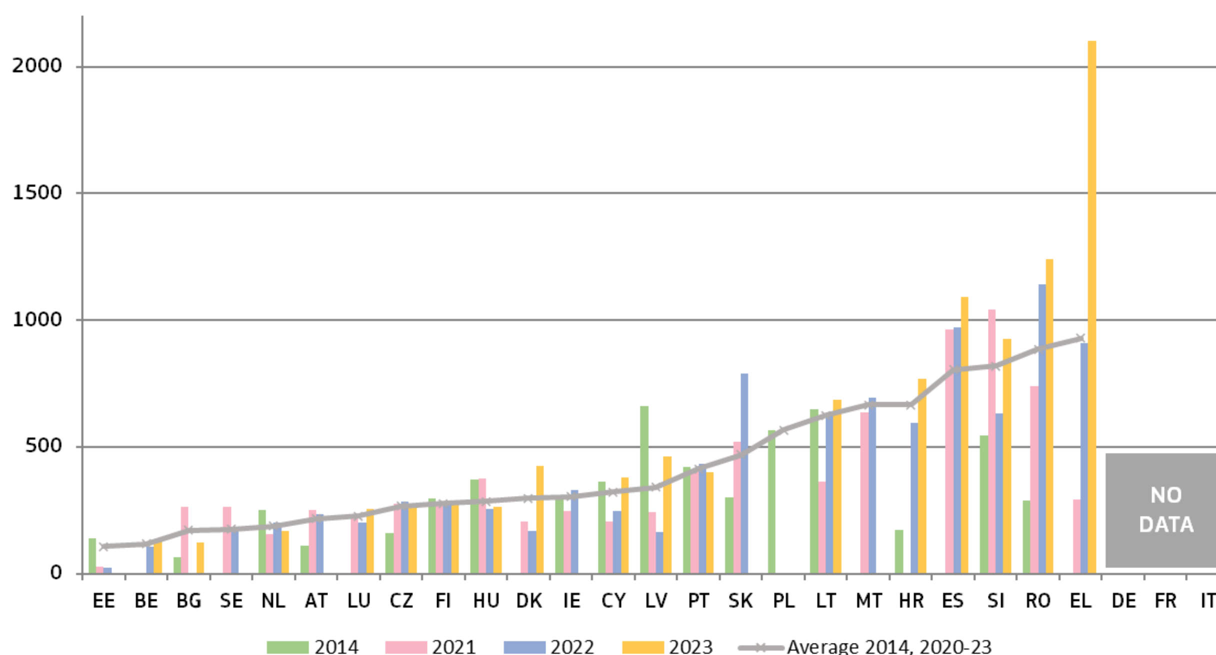


(*) The average is weighted by the number of cases in the respective year. ***DE***, ***LU***, ***AT****: Not applicable as consumer authorities are not empowered to decide on infringements of the relevant consumer rules. An estimate of average length was provided by* ***DK***, ***EL***, ***FR***, ***RO*** *and* ***FI*** *for certain years.*

– Money laundering –

In addition to depriving criminals of resources for perpetrating their illicit acts and effectively dismantling organised crime networks, preventing and combating money laundering ([55]) is crucial for the soundness, integrity and stability of the financial sector, confidence in the financial system and fair competition in the single market ([56]). Money laundering can discourage foreign investment, distort international capital flows and negatively affect a country's macroeconomic performance, resulting in welfare losses, thereby draining resources from more productive economic activities ([57]). The Anti-Money Laundering Directive requires Member States to maintain statistics on the effectiveness of their systems to combat money laundering and terrorist financing ([58]). In cooperation with Member States, an updated questionnaire was used to collect data on the judicial aspects in national anti-money laundering regimes. Figure 21 shows the average length of first instance court cases dealing with money laundering criminal offences.

Figure 21: Money laundering: average length of court cases in 2014, 2021 – 2023(*) *(at first instance/in days) (source: European Commission with the Expert Group on Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism)*



[55] EU legislation addresses the fight against money laundering through Directive (EU) 2018/1673 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on combating money laundering by criminal law.

[56] Recital 2 of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing.

[57] IMF factsheet, 8 March 2018: https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2016/08/01/16/31/Fight-Against-Money-Laundering-the-Financing-of-Terrorism

[58] Article 44(1) of Directive (EU) 2015/849. See also the revised Article 44 of Directive (EU) 2018/843, which entered into force in June 2018 and had to be implemented by Member States by January 2020.

*(*) The average is weighted by the number of cases in the respective year. For **PT**: The database was filtered, for each judicial county, by the relevant criteria to reach the information related to money laundering files; regarding the average number of days, the dates of infraction and the date of final decision or closure were taken into account. **CY**: Serious cases, before the Assize Court, are on average tried within a year. Less serious offences, before the district courts, take longer to be tried. **SK**: Data correspond to the average length of the whole proceedings, including at appeal court.*

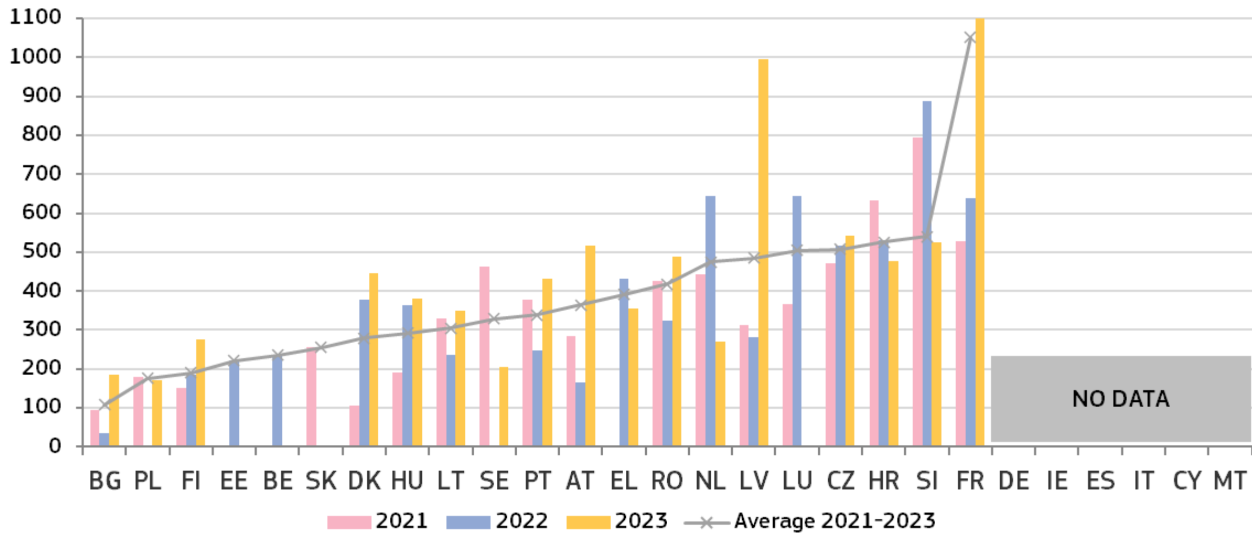
– Anti-corruption –

Corruption is an impediment to sustainable economic growth, diverting resources from productive outcomes, undermining the efficiency of public spending and deepening social inequalities. It hampers the effective and smooth functioning of the single market, creates uncertainties in doing business and holds back investment. Corruption is particularly complex to tackle since, unlike most crimes, both parties involved in a corruption case are generally interested in maintaining secrecy about it. This also contributes to a general difficulty to quantify the true magnitude of the corruption phenomenon across the EU. Corruption is a particularly serious crime with a cross-border dimension, as referred to in Article 83(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and can only be effectively tackled by common minimum rules across the European Union. On 3 May 2023, the Commission put forward a proposal for a Directive on combating corruption by criminal law, accompanied by a joint communication on the fight against corruption ([59]). The proposal for a directive updates and harmonises EU rules on the definitions of and penalties for corruption offences, to ensure high standards in the fight against the full range of corruption offences (i.e. bribery, but also misappropriation, trading in influence, abuse of functions, obstruction of justice and the illicit enrichment related to corruption offences), to better prevent corruption and to improve enforcement. In cooperation with Member States, a new questionnaire was developed in 2022 to collect data on the length of court proceedings before first instance courts in bribery cases, which is presented in Figure 22 below ([60]).

[59] Proposal for a Directive on combating corruption COM (2023) 234 and Joint Communication on the fight against corruption JOIN(2023) 12 final.

[60] This data collection has focused on criminal courts of first instance, which usually contribute the most to the overall length of criminal proceedings.

Figure 22: <u>Corruption (bribery)</u>: average length of court cases from 2021 to 2023 (*) *(at first instance/in days) (source: European Commission with the National Contact Points for Anti-corruption)*



(*) The average is weighted by the number of cases in the respective year. No reply to this question from ***DE****,* ***IE****,* ***ES****,* ***IT****,* ***CY****,* ***MT****.* ***NL****: In this calculation for 2022, the period starts to run from the date the public prosecution service summons the defendant to appear in court; the period ends on the day when the judge of first instance delivers the final verdict. The average processing time for the aforementioned 35 cases is 645 days. However, account must be taken of the fact that a case is often not ready for the hearing at the moment the period starts to run. As a result, it takes some time before the case is presented for hearing. The average length from first hearing until delivery of the final verdict is 194 days.*

2.1.4. Summary on the efficiency of justice systems

An efficient justice system manages its caseload and backlog of cases, and delivers its decisions without undue delay. The main indicators used by the EU Justice Scoreboard to monitor the efficiency of justice systems are therefore the **length of proceedings** (disposition time or average time in days needed to resolve a case), the **clearance rate** (the ratio of resolved cases to incoming cases) and the number of **pending cases** (that remain to be dealt with at the end of the year).

General data on efficiency

The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard contains data on efficiency spanning nine years (2014-2023). This timespan was updated from 2012 to 2014 to allow for better data availability, while maintaining a similar length to allow trends to become apparent. This timespan also makes it possible to take account of the fact that it often takes time for the effect of justice reforms to be felt.

The data from 2014 to 2023 in civil, commercial and administrative cases shows positive trends in most cases. After the dip in efficiency observed in 2020, possibly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 and (even more so) 2022 saw a return to the efficiency levels of 2019. In 2023, some of the Member States that are reporting data have continued improving their efficiency, while in others efficiency levels remained stable. This shows the effect of the measures taken by Member States to make their systems more resilient to future disruptions.

There were some positive developments in the Member States that in the past years were considered to be facing specific challenges, in the context of the European Semester ([61]).

- From 2014, based on the existing data for these Member States, the **length of first instance court proceedings** in the broad 'all cases' category (Figure 4) in 16 Member States decreased or remained stable. For the 'litigious civil and commercial cases' category (Figure 5) the length of first instance court proceedings continued to decrease or remained stable in 13 Member States. Compared to the previous year, figures 4 and 5 show a decrease in the length of proceedings for eight Member States, in each category, in some cases to below 2020 levels. In administrative cases (Figure 7), the length of proceedings since 2012 has decreased or remained stable in about 15 Member States. Compared to the previous year, 12 Member States saw a decrease in the length of proceedings in administrative cases in 2023.
- The Scoreboard presents data on the **length of proceedings in all court instances** for litigious civil and commercial cases (Figure 6) and administrative cases (Figure 8). Data

[61] In the context of the European Semester, the Council, on the basis of the Commission's proposal, addressed country-specific recommendations (CSRs) on their justice systems to seven Member States in 2019 (HR, IT, CY, HU, MT, PT and SK) and eight Member States in 2020 (HR, IT, CY, HU, MT, PL, PT and SK). There were no CSRs in 2021 due to the ongoing RRF process. In 2022, there were two Member States (PL and HU) with CSRs related to judicial independence. In addition, in 2023 the justice system was mentioned for two Member States (HU, PL). In 2023, only PL received a CSR on its justice system, which was based on the 2022 CSR. In 2024, SK received a CSR related to the justice system and anti-corruption framework, HU received a CSR related to the rule of law more generally, while BG received a CSR regarding the regulatory authorities and their independence. As per the Commission's June 2025 draft, CSRs reiterate the same issues for SK, HU and BG. Additionally, they address effectiveness of anti-corruption measures for BG and the legislative process for SK, while a CSR regarding judicial efficiency is issued to ES. Several RRPs include measures to increase the efficiency, quality, or independence of justice.

show that in five of the Member States identified as facing challenges with the length of proceedings in first instance courts, higher instance courts have performed more efficiently. However, for five other Member States facing challenges, the average length of proceedings in higher instance courts is even longer than in first instance courts.

- In the broad 'all cases' and 'litigious civil and commercial cases' categories (Figures 9 and 10), the overall number of Member States whose **clearance rate** is over 100% remained the same as in 2022. In 2023, 18 Member States, including those facing challenges, reported a high clearance rate (more than 97%). This means that courts are generally able to deal with the incoming cases in these categories. In administrative cases (Figure 11), the clearance rate in 14 Member States in 2023 remained broadly the same as in 2022. While the clearance rate in administrative cases is generally lower than for other categories of cases, 15 Member States continue to make good progress. In particular, seven of the Member States facing challenges report an increase in the clearance rate for administrative cases since 2014.
- Since 2014, the situation has remained stable or continued to improve in four of the Member States facing the most substantial challenges with their **backlogs**, regardless of the category of cases (Figure 12). In 2023, despite the increase in the number of pending cases, the number of pending cases remained stable in litigious civil and commercial cases (Figure 13) and in administrative cases (Figure 14) in 10 Member States. However, significant differences remain between Member States with comparatively few pending cases and those with a high number of pending cases.

Efficiency in specific areas of EU law

Data on the average length of proceedings in specific areas of EU law (Figures 15-22) provide an insight into the functioning of justice systems in concrete types of business-related disputes.

Data on efficiency in specific areas of EU law are collected based on narrowly defined scenarios, so the number of relevant cases may be low. However, compared to the calculated length of proceedings presented in the general data on efficiency, these figures show an actual average length of all relevant cases in specific areas in a year. It is worth noting that Member States where the general data on efficiency do not appear to show challenges nonetheless report significantly longer average case lengths in specific areas of EU law. At the same time, the length of proceedings in different specific areas may also vary considerably within the same Member State.

Another figure introduced last year focuses on the length of criminal proceedings, particularly those involving bribery, revealing the level of efficiency in that area of EU law.

Finally, the 2025 Scoreboard continues to provide insight into the efficiency of the overall enforcement chain, which is important for a positive business and investment environment. For example, in competition law cases, there is a chart focusing on the length of proceedings before the national competition authority and of the judicial review of the decisions of this authority.

- For **judicial review of competition cases** (Figure 15), as the overall caseload faced by courts across the EU increased, the length of judicial review decreased or remained stable in five Member States, while it increased in seven. Despite the moderately positive trend, seven Member States reported an average length exceeding 1 000 days in 2023. For **proceedings before the national competition authorities** (Figure 16), 11 Member States reported that proceedings took less than 1 000 days. Among the Member States

cited as experiencing issues with efficiency in the judicial review of competition cases, three are among the most efficient when it comes to proceedings before the national competition authorities.

- For **electronic communications** (Figure 17), the caseload faced by courts decreased compared to previous years, continuing the positive trend observed in 2022 regarding reductions in the length of proceedings. In 2023, nine Member States registered a decrease in the average length of proceedings compared to 2022 or saw this figure remain stable, and seven showed an increase.
- For **EU trademark infringement cases** (Figure 18), in 2023 the overall caseload decreased in comparison to 2022. However, while four Member States managed their caseload more efficiently, registering reduced or stable lengths of proceedings, six saw a clear increase in the average length of proceedings.
- In the area of **EU consumer law**, the possible combined effect of the enforcement chain consisting of both administrative and judicial review proceedings can be seen (Figures 19 and 20). In 2023, six Member States reported that their consumer protection authorities took less than three months on average to issue a decision in a case covered by EU consumer law. In nine other Member States, they took up to a year. Where decisions by the consumer protection authorities were challenged in court, trends in the length of the judicial review of an administrative decision in 2023 diverged, with increases in five Member States and decreases in five others compared to 2022. In two Member States, the average length of a judicial review is still over 1 000 days.
- Effective measures to combat **money laundering** are crucial to protecting the financial system, ensuring fair competition and preventing negative economic consequences. Excessively long court proceedings may hamper the EU's ability to fight money laundering or reduce the effectiveness of efforts in this field. Figure 21 presents updated data on the length of judicial proceedings dealing with money laundering offences. It shows that, while in seven Member States first instance court proceedings take up to a year on average, they take up to two years on average in five Member States, and in five Member States they take up to 3.5 years on average ([62]).
- **Corruption** is a particularly serious crime with a cross-border dimension. It has negative economic consequences and can only be effectively tackled by common minimum rules across the EU. The Scoreboard presents figures on the length of judicial proceedings dealing with bribery cases. Figure 22 shows varying levels of data availability among Member States, and differences in the average length of proceedings before first-instance criminal courts. Looking at 2023 data, proceedings are concluded within about a year in eight Member States, while in the remaining seven where data are available, proceedings can last up to two years. Overall, the complexity of prosecuting and adjudicating bribery offences reflects the serious nature of the crime. This is also reflected in the length of proceedings.

[62] Directive (EU) 2018/1673 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on combating money laundering by criminal law will eliminate certain legal obstacles that may delay prosecution, such as a rule that prosecution for money laundering can only start when the proceedings for the underlying predicate offence have been concluded. Member States were required to transpose the Directive by 8 December 2020.

2.2. Quality of justice systems

There is no single way to measure the quality of justice systems. The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard continues to examine factors that are generally accepted as relevant for improving the quality of justice. They fall into four categories:

1) access to justice for the public and businesses;

2) adequate financial and human resources;

3) putting in place of assessment tools;

4) digitalisation.

2.2.1. Access to justice

Accessibility is required throughout the whole justice chain to enable all people, including people at risk of discrimination, older persons and victims of crime, to obtain relevant information – about the justice system, about how to make a claim and the related financial aspects, about the state of play of proceedings up until they are complete – and to access the judgment online.

– Legal aid, court fees and legal fees –

The cost of litigation is a key factor that determines access to justice. High litigation costs, including court fees ([63]) and legal fees ([64]), may hinder access to justice. Litigation costs in civil and commercial matters are not harmonised at EU level. They are governed by national legislation and vary from one Member State to another.

Access to legal aid is a fundamental right enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU ([65]). It allows access to justice to people who would not otherwise be able to bear or advance the costs of litigation. Most Member States grant legal aid based on the applicant's income ([66]).

Figure 23 shows the availability of full or partial legal aid in a specific consumer case involving a claim of EUR 6 000. It compares the income thresholds for granting legal aid, expressed as a percentage of the Eurostat poverty threshold for each Member State ([67]). For example, if the threshold for legal aid is 20% it means that an applicant with an income 20% higher than the

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63 Court fees are understood as an amount to be paid to start non-criminal legal proceedings in a court or tribunal.

64 Legal fees are the bill for services provided by lawyers to their clients.

65 Article 47(3) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

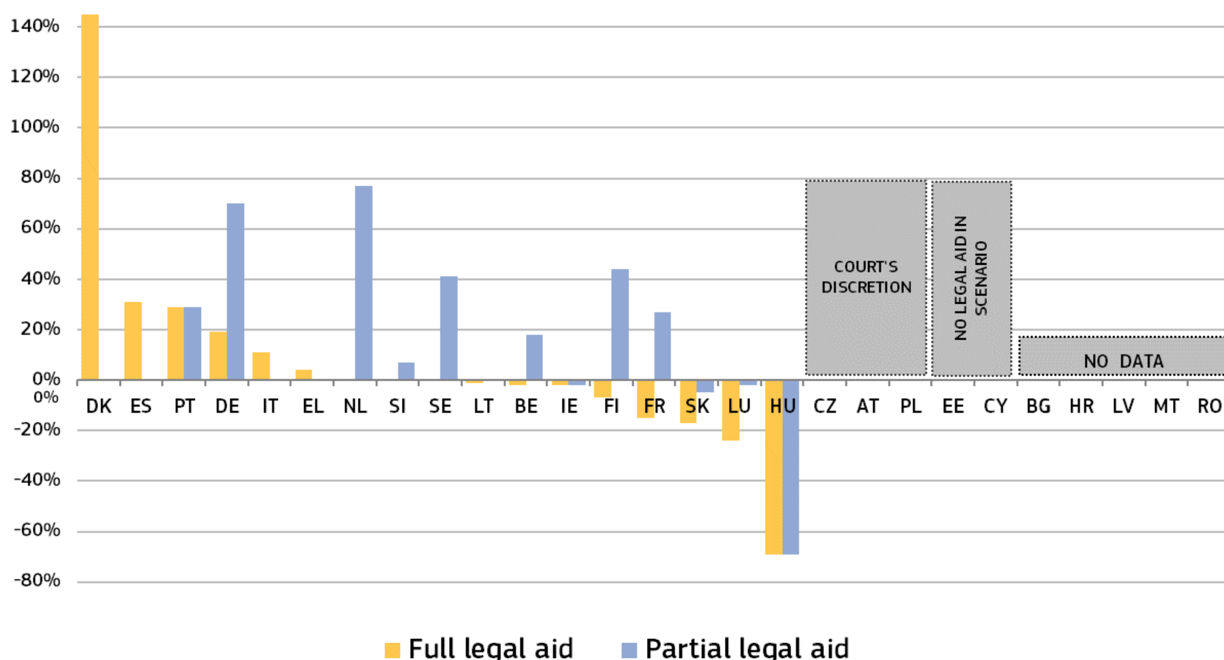
66 Member States use different methods to set the eligibility threshold, e.g. different reference periods (monthly/annual income). In 14 Member States there is also a threshold tied to the applicant's personal capital. This is not taken into account for this figure. In BE, BG, IE, ES, FR, HR, HU, LT, LU, NL and PT, certain groups of people (e.g. individuals who receive certain benefits) are automatically entitled to receive legal aid in civil/commercial disputes. Additional criteria that Member States may use, such as the merits of the case, are not reflected in this figure. Although not directly related to the figure, in several Member States (AT, CZ, DE, DK, IT, NL, PL, SI) legal aid is not limited to natural persons. In EE, the decision to grant legal aid is not based on the level of financial resources of the applicant. In IE, partial legal aid has to take into account also the disposable assets of the applicant. In LV, the data are not comparable with the previous year due to adaptation of the method of calculation.

67 To collect comparable data, each Member State's Eurostat poverty threshold has been converted to a monthly income. The at-risk-of-poverty (AROP) threshold is set at 60% of the national median equivalised disposable household income. European Survey on Income and Living Conditions, Eurostat table ilc_li01, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ilc_li01/default/table?lang=en.

Eurostat poverty threshold for their Member State will still be eligible for legal aid. However, if the threshold for legal aid is below 0, this means that a person with an income below the poverty threshold may not be eligible for legal aid.

Nine Member States operate a legal aid system that provides for 100% coverage of the costs linked to litigation (full legal aid), complemented by a system covering partial costs (partial legal aid) which applies different eligibility criteria. Ten Member States operate either a full or partial legal aid system, but not both. In four Member States, the courts have discretion over granting legal aid.

Figure 23: Income threshold for legal aid in a specific consumer case, 2024 (*) *(differences in % from Eurostat poverty threshold) (source: European Commission with the Council of Bar and Law Societies in Europe (CCBE) ([68]))*



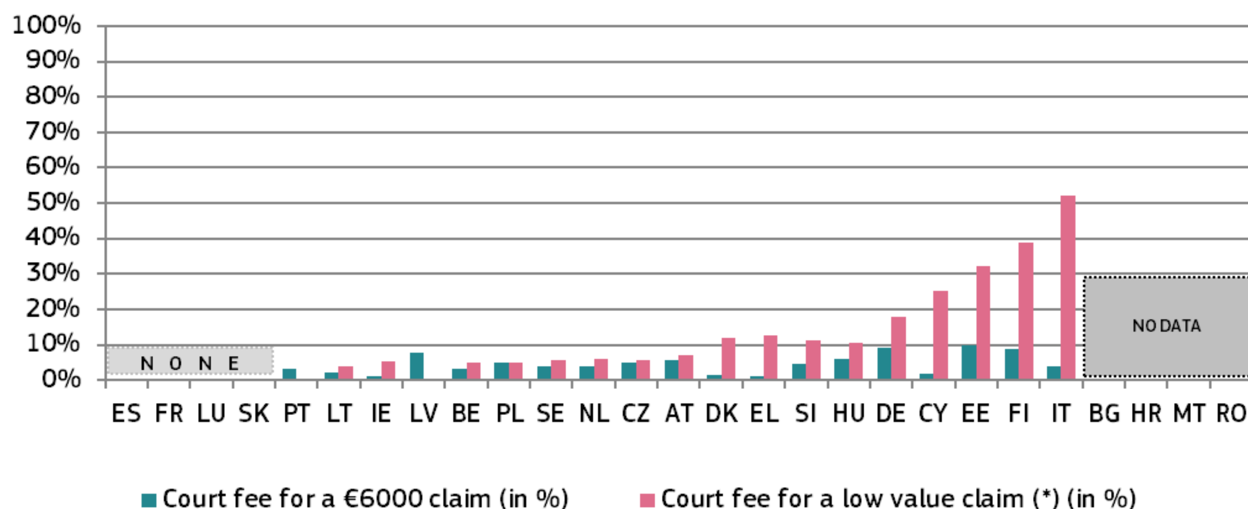
(*) Calculations are based on 2023 at-risk-of-poverty (AROP) threshold values. ***BE, DE, ES, FR, IE, IT, LT, LU, NL, SI, SK, FI:*** *Legal aid also has to take into account the applicant's disposable assets.* ***EL****: Beneficiary of legal aid is a person whose capital annual income does not exceed 2/3 of the lowest annual salaries as provided for by the existing legislation.* ***LU:*** *A partial legal aid regime was introduced. There is no specific threshold, granting legal aid depends on the overall financial and family situation of the applicant.* ***BG, HR, LV, MT and RO:*** *No data provided.*

Recipients of legal aid are often exempt from paying court fees. Only in six Member States (Bulgaria, Czechia, Greece, Austria, Malta and Poland) are recipients of legal aid not automatically exempt from paying court fees. In Czechia, the court decides on a case-by-case basis whether or not to exempt a legal aid recipient from paying court fees. In Luxembourg, litigants who benefit from legal aid do not have to pay bailiff fees. Figure 24 compares, for two scenarios, the amount

[68] The 2024 data are collected using replies from Council of Bar and Law Societies in Europe (CCBE) members to a questionnaire based on the following specific scenario: a dispute of a consumer with a company (two different claim values indicated: EUR 6 000 and the Eurostat AROP threshold for each Member State). Given that conditions for legal aid depend on the applicant's situation, the following scenario was used: a single 35-year-old employed applicant without any dependant or legal expenses insurance, with a regular income and a rented apartment.

of the court fee presented as a proportion of the value of the claim. For example, if the court fee in the figure below is 10% of a EUR 6 000 claim, the consumer will have to pay a EUR 600 court fee to start judicial proceedings. The low value claim is based on the Eurostat at-risk-of-poverty (AROP) threshold for each Member State.

Figure 24: Court fee to start judicial proceedings in a specific consumer case, 2024 (*) (*amount of court fee as a proportion of the value of the claim*) *(source: European Commission with the Council of Bar and Law Societies in Europe (CCBE) ([69]))*



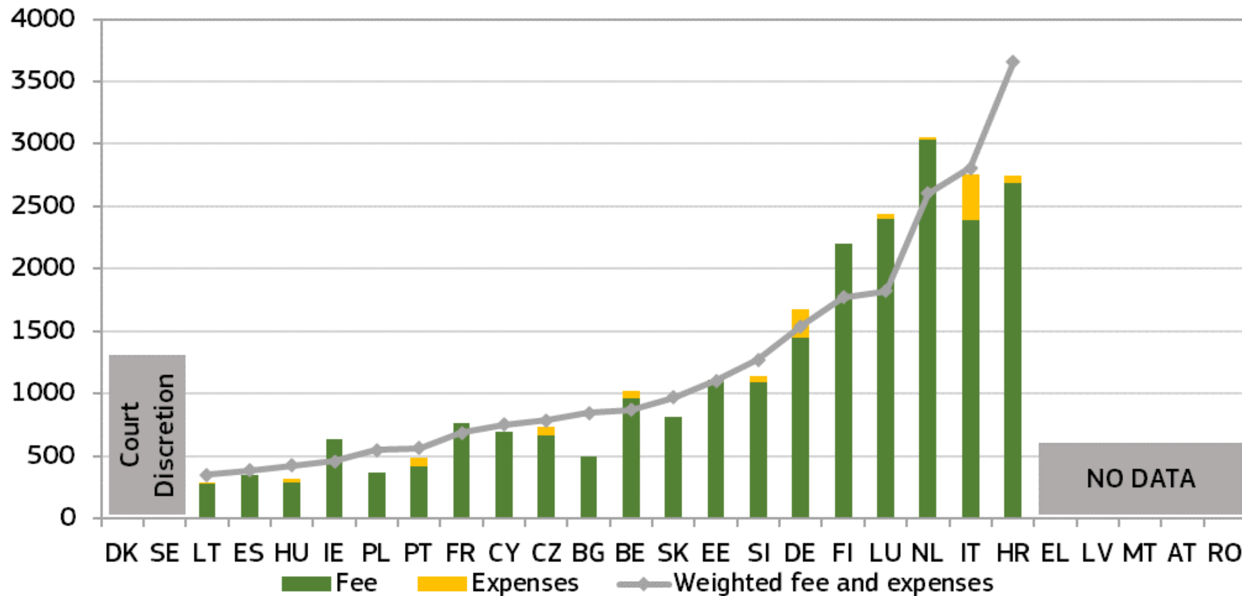
*(*) Calculations are based on 2023 at-risk-of-poverty (AROP) threshold values. A 'low-value claim' is a claim corresponding to the Eurostat poverty threshold for a single person in each Member State, converted to monthly income (e.g. in 2022, this value ranged from EUR 326 in **BG** to EUR 2 381 in **LU**). **BE**: EUR 24 contribution to the Fund for the second line legal aid; Court registry fees: EUR 50 or EUR 165. Afterwards, if dismissed/convicted: possibly EUR 1 350 for the procedural indemnity. **NL**: Court fees values correspond to a litigant with less than EUR 30 000 annual income. **SE**: The court fee applies if the value of the claim exceeds EUR 2 329.*

Figure 25 presents the rate of legal aid paid to criminal defence lawyers in a specific criminal case based on a case study ([70]). Respondents have indicated how much lawyers would be paid from the public budget in the fictional scenario described.

[69] The data, referring to income thresholds valid in 2023, have been collected using replies from Council of Bar and Law Societies in Europe (CCBE) members to a questionnaire based on the following scenario: a consumer dispute between an individual and a company (two different claim values indicated: EUR 6 000 and the Eurostat AROP threshold for each Member State).

[70] See footnote 70, 2024 EU Justice Scoreboard for the description of the case study.

Figure 25: Rate of legal aid paid to criminal defence lawyers in a specific criminal case, 2024 *(*) (source: European Commission with the Council of Bar and Law Societies in Europe (CCBE) ([71]))*



(*) The data are gathered based on a specific case study. The amounts are all in EUR, and where needed they were converted from national currencies[72]. To take account of the economic differences between Member States the added value of the fee and expense were divided by the comparative price level indices expressed in percentage where the EU average is 100%, DK is 149% and BG is 59%[73]. This adjusts the sum of fees and expenses that the lawyers receive. ***AT****: The Austrian legal aid system is state funded and based on the solidarity of all Austrian lawyers who all participate on a rotation-based system in the legal aid system. In general, the individual lawyer does not receive any direct remuneration for legal aid services. Instead, the Austrian state pays a yearly lump sum to the Austrian Bar for the total of legal aid services rendered by all lawyers. The Austrian Bar distributes this sum to the regional bars on the basis of the number of registered lawyers who provided legal aid services and on the basis of the number of legal aid cases which were handled by the regional bars. The money is used for the lawyers' social security and pension scheme, which is not state funded.* ***IE****:The legal profession is split into barristers and solicitors. The legal aid of each of the professions is entitled to differs. The figure above presents the maximum that could be charged as a fee under the legal aid scheme in the particular scenario.*

[71] The data, referring to income thresholds valid in 2022, have been collected using replies from Council of Bar and Law Societies in Europe (CCBE) members to a questionnaire based on the following scenario: a consumer dispute between an individual and a company (two different claim values indicated: EUR 6 000 and the Eurostat AROP threshold for each Member State).

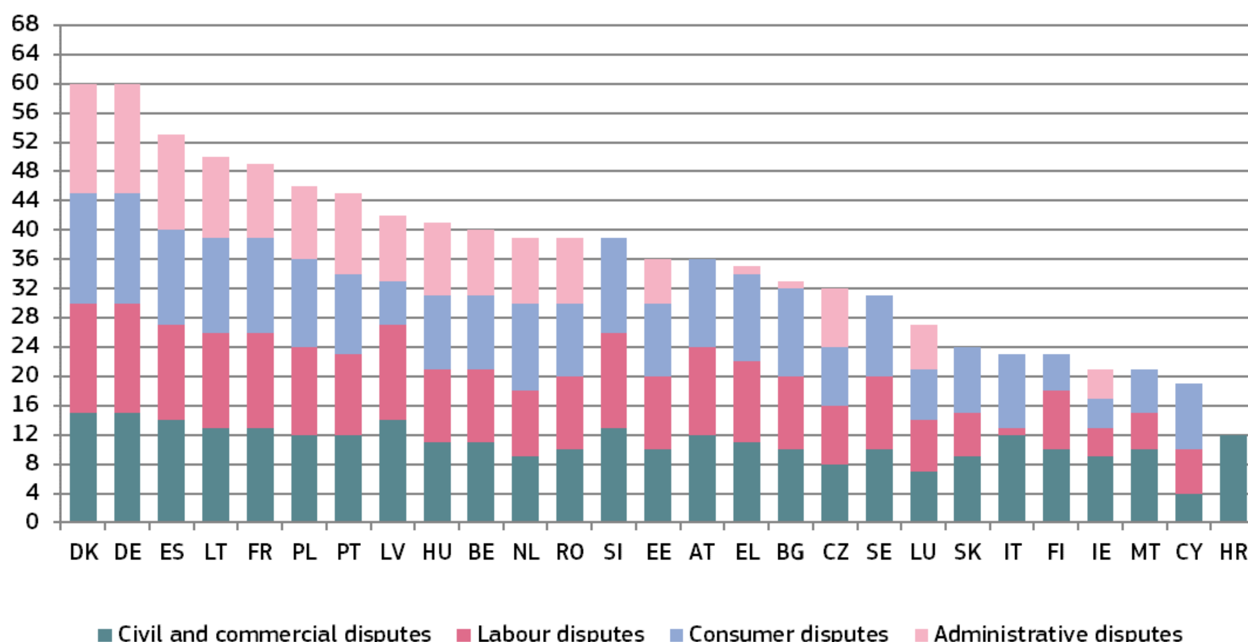
[72] Conversion made using the European Central Bank's Euro Foreign Exchange Reference Rates applicable on 30 September 2024 - BGN 1.9558, CZK 25.184, DKK 7.4560, HUF 396.88, PLN 4.2788, RON 4.9753, SEK 11.3000.

[73] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tec00120/default/table?lang=en&category=t_prc.t_prc_ppp

– Accessing alternative dispute resolution methods –

Figure 26 shows Member States' efforts to promote the voluntary use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods with specific incentives. These may vary depending on the area of law ([74]).

Figure 26: Promotion of and incentives for using ADR methods, 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([75]))*



*(*) Maximum possible: 68 points. Aggregated indicators based on the following indicators: 1) website providing information on ADR; 2) media publicity campaigns; 3) brochures for the general public; 4) provision by the court of specific information sessions on ADR upon request; 5) court ADR/mediation coordinator; 6) publication of evaluations on the use of ADR; 7) publication of statistics on the use of ADR; 8) partial or full coverage by legal aid of costs ADR incurred; 9) full or partial refund of court fees, including stamp duties, if ADR is successful; 10) no requirement for a lawyer for ADR procedures; 11) judge can act as a mediator; 12) agreement reached by the parties becomes enforceable by the court; 13) possibility to initiate proceedings/file a claim and submit documentary evidence online; 14) parties can be informed of the initiation and different steps of procedures electronically; 15) possibility of online payment of applicable fees; 16) use of technology (artificial intelligence applications, chat bots) to facilitate the submission and resolution of disputes; and 17) other means. For each of these 17 indicators, one point was awarded for each area of law. **IE**: Administrative cases fall into the category of civil and commercial cases. **EL**: ADR exists in public procurement procedures before administrative courts of appeal. **ES**: ADR is mandatory in labour law cases. **PT**: For civil/commercial disputes, court fees are refunded only in the case of justices of the peace. **SK**: The Slovak legal order does not support the use of ADR for administrative purposes. **FI**: Consumer and labour disputes are also considered to be civil cases. **SE**: Judges have procedural discretion on ADR. Seeking an amicable dispute settlement is a mandatory task for the judge unless it is inappropriate due to the nature of the case.*

[74] The methods for promoting and incentivising the use of ADR do not include compulsory requirements to use ADR before going to court. Such requirements may raise concerns about their compatibility with the right to an effective remedy before a tribunal enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

[75] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

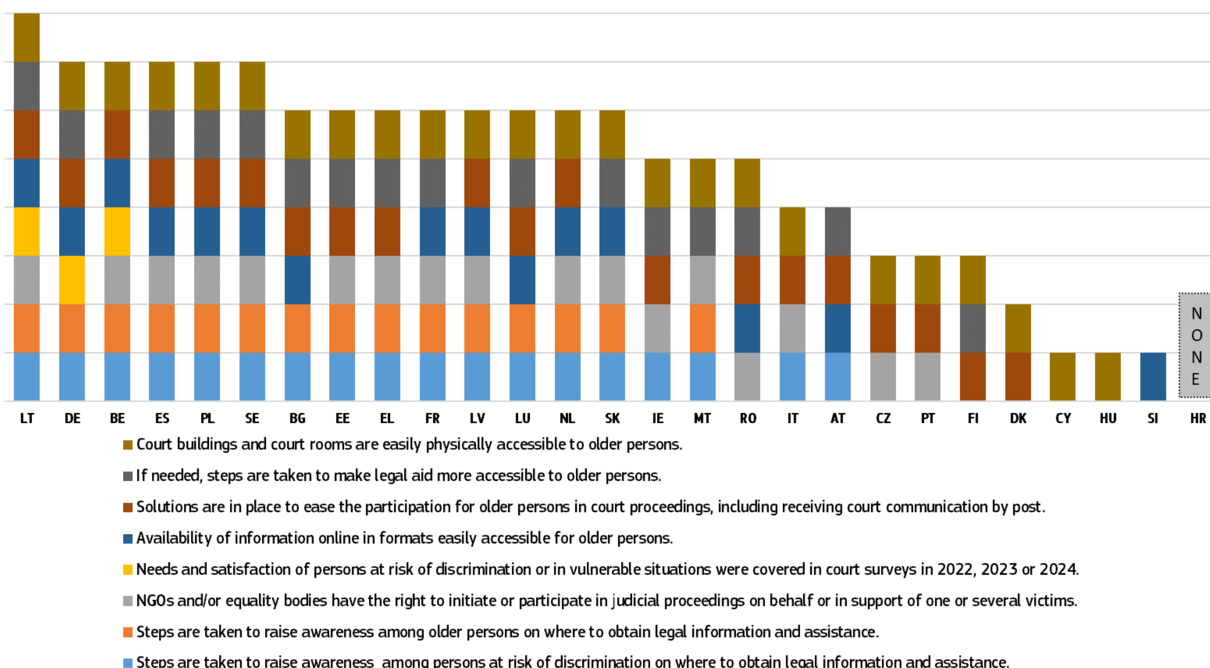
– Specific arrangements for access to justice –

The 2022 EU Justice Scoreboard presented dedicated figures on specific arrangements to facilitate equal access to justice of persons with disabilities. The 2023 EU Justice Scoreboard continued to further explore selected specific arrangements that facilitate equal access to justice for persons at risk of discrimination, and also for two specific groups: older people and victims of violence against women and domestic violence. The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard again takes stock of these selected specific arrangements two years after the last time these data were presented.

The chart below outlines the steps each Member State has taken to address barriers to justice for persons at risk of discrimination, including older people. This also includes the physical accessibility of court buildings, access to legal information, assistance or legal aid, and the format of the online information.

The chart shows a number of positive trends including in relation to the physical accessibility of court buildings and court rooms, the accessibility of legal aid, or solutions in place to help older persons participate in court proceedings. It also shows that information is more available online in formats easily accessible for older persons and that NGOs or equality bodies have the right to initiate or participate in judicial proceedings in a higher number of Member States. Some Member States, however, continue to face challenges. There are still Member States where progress is slow and in which the situation is stagnant or even worsening.

Figure 27: Specific arrangements for access to justice to persons at risk of discrimination[76] and older persons[77] *(source: European Commission ([78]))*



*(*) **BE**: Unia is an independent public institution that promotes equality and combats discrimination. There are also dedicated websites including Just-on-web and e-deposit. **DK**: People can be exempted from using digital public solutions, for example if they do not have access to a computer, smartphone, or tablet at their place of residence. In special cases, the court can decide that a person may be exempted from using minretssag.dk if the person lacks digital skills or has specific disabilities. **IE**: The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission has the power to apply to the High Court, Court of Appeal or the Supreme Court for liberty to appear before the court as amicus curiae in proceedings involving human rights and/or equality; digital filing does not replace traditional forms of filing and serving. **ES**: Article 7 bis of the Spanish Civil Procedure Act introduces several new provisions to ensure that older people have easy access to justice. **HR**: the last survey of this kind was in 2017. A new survey in 2025 will divide questions according the age groups of the participants. **IT**: not all court premisses are accessible to older persons. **FI**: legal aid officers can organise visits to an older person to get their issue handled. **LT**: According to the Law on State-Guaranteed Legal Aid, victims of criminal acts committed with the intent to express hatred towards them, including on grounds of age, are eligible for legal aid regardless of their income and assets. **MT**: In 2023, Legal Aid Malta signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Active Ageing and Community Care in order to provide free legal assistance to elderly clients (clients over 60 years) in both civil and criminal cases, including cases in which older persons are victims of criminality or have suffered gender-related violence. **NL**: The Judiciary informs the public about where they can go for legal advice (Juridisch Loket, lawyers, etc.). This information should be user-friendly and understandable for everyone, including older persons. User research conducted to check this. **AT**: Court buildings are (with a few exceptions) barrier-free and therefore physically easily accessible to older persons. **PL**: NGOs whose statutory task is not to conduct business may, for the protection of citizens' rights, in cases provided for by law, initiate proceedings and participate in pending proceedings. **PT**: When a vulnerable person is victim of a public crime (for public crimes proceedings are initiated ex officio by the public prosecutor), NGOs or*

[76] Persons at risk of discrimination, in particular on the grounds enumerated in Article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union: "sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation," and Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights: "sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation."

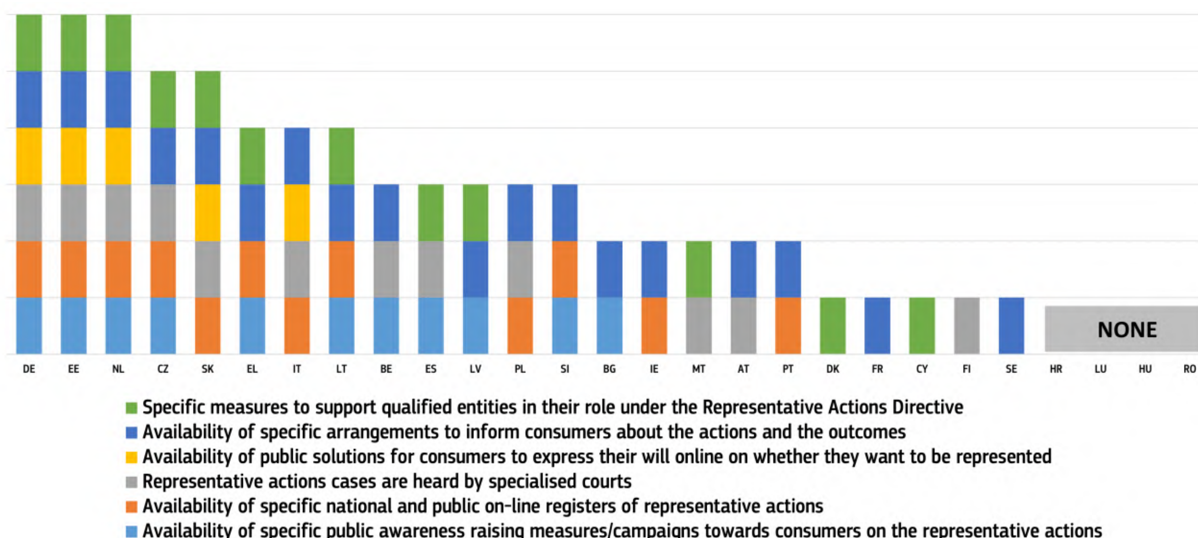
[77] For the purpose of this chart, persons aged 65 years or more.

[78] 2023 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

equality bodies may initiate the proceedings. ***SI****: dedicated websites provide information about procedures in an informative and friendly manner.* ***SK****: Access to the constitutionally guaranteed right of citizens to legal aid is implemented mainly through Legal Aid Centres and public defenders of rights.*

Figure 28 complements Figures 19 and 20 on the efficiency of proceedings in the area of consumer law by showing specific selected measures undertaken by EU Member States to increase awareness on the new European model of collective redress ([79]) aimed at improving consumers' access to justice in mass harm situations.

Figure 28: Specific arrangements for representative actions protecting the collective interests of consumers, 2024 (*) (*source: European Commission ([80])*)



(*) Representative actions as set out by Directive (EU) 2020/1828. They are actions brought by qualified entities before national courts or administrative authorities on behalf of groups of consumers to seek injunctive measures (i.e. to stop a trader's unlawful practices, similarly to what is provided for in the Injunctions Directive 2009/22/EC), redress measures (such as refund, replacement, repair) or both injunctive and redress measures. This question intends to collect information on specific practices, which are not necessarily directly linked to the implementation of the Directive. Data are not reported for ***HR, LU, HU, RO****.* ***NL****: All courts (the civil law divisions) in the Netherlands are competent in representative action cases. In practice, these cases are handled by a national pool of judges specialised/experienced in this type of procedure. It is an opt out system, meaning that consumers only need to act if they do not want to be represented in the action. This must be expressed to the court in writing.* ***BE****: there is no registry but certain decisions have to be published on the website of the Ministry of Economy and the official journal.* ***DK****: Currently, the qualified entities are the Danish Consumer Ombudsman (Forbrugerombudsmanden) and the Danish Medicines Agency (Lægemiddelstyrelsen) which are both supported by public funding.* ***EE****: consumer disputes are heard at the Consumer Disputes Committee which is an independent and impartial entity resolving consumer disputes.* ***IE****: the Citizens Information website has published an article on representative actions as part of their 'How to complain' information page for consumers.* ***EL****: Law 5019/2023 puts in place a new system of representative actions.* ***LV****: There is one cross-border qualified entity designated in Latvia. There have not been any representative action*

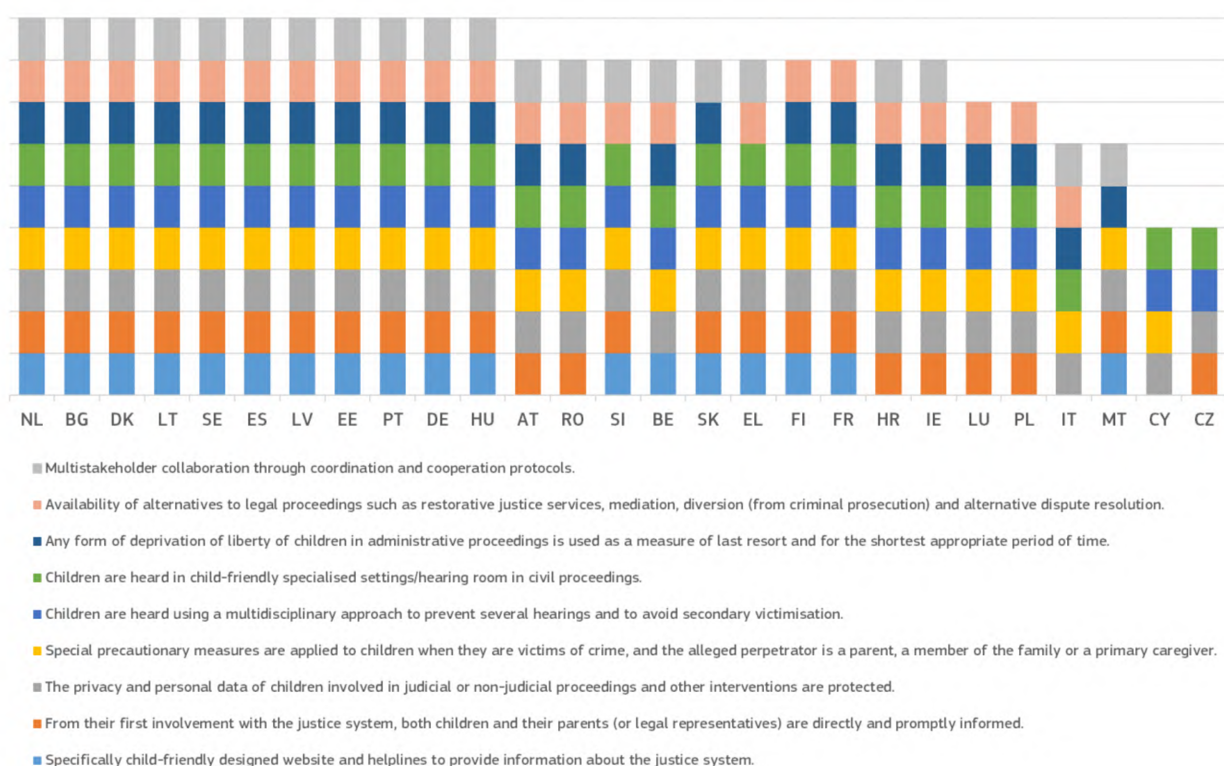
[79] As introduced by Directive (EU) 2020/1828 on representative actions, https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-topic/consumer-protection-law/representative-actions-directive_en, for the protection of the collective interests of consumers.

[80] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems and the European Judicial Training Network.

cases yet. ***LT****: Public awareness measures regarding consumer representative actions are mainly implemented by providing relevant information on the websites of the State Consumer Rights Protection Authority (SCRPA) and consumer associations (e.g. memo published on the website of SCRPA, https://vvtat.lrv.lt/media/viesa/saugykla/2024/2/o2moBOazC4c.pdf).* ***PT****: The list of the representative actions brought before PT courts is available on the Directorate-General for Consumers' website, as well as the contact of the entity and any relevant document for consumers: https://www.consumidor.gov.pt/consumidor_4/acoes-coletivas/informacoes-sobre-acoes-coletivas.* ***SK****: consumers are able to join the collective action through any notary. The application form is available at the following link https://static.slov-lex.sk/pdf/prilohy/SK/ZZ/2023/289/20230725_5563264-2.pdf.*

The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard extends the analysis of child-friendly justice. Figure 29 looks at a broader variety of specific arrangements for child-friendly justice (both civil and criminal/juvenile justice proceedings). Figure 30 explores a broader range of specific arrangements available when a child is involved as a victim or as a suspect/accused person in judicial proceedings.

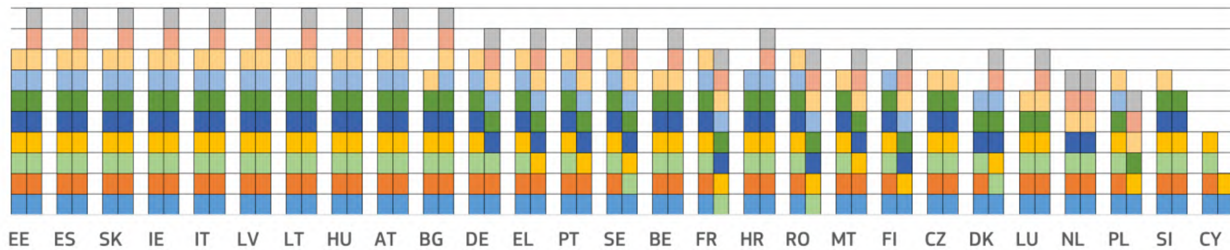
Figure 29: Specific arrangements for child-friendly justice/proceedings (both civil and criminal/juvenile justice proceedings), 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([81]).*



(*)Children: persons under 18 years of age.

[81] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

Figure 30: Specific arrangements for <u>children involved in criminal proceedings as victims or suspects and accused persons</u> (children: persons below 18 years of age), 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([82]))*



For each Member State, the two columns represent the involvement of children as (from left to right):
1. victims
2. suspects or accused persons

- Where children are deprived of liberty, they are, as a rule, held separately from adults, and under conditions that ensure compliance with their needs and rights.
- Any form of deprivation of liberty of children is used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.
- Judges, prosecutors and other legal professionals in contact with children receive specific training.
- Children are accompanied by their legal representative or another appropriate person appointed by them throughout the proceedings.
- Children's specific needs are taken into account throughout the proceedings on the basis of an individual assessment.
- Children are always assisted by a lawyer (i.e. irrespective of whether the child actively requests such assistance).
- Specific measures are in place to provide for audio-visual recording of questioning of children, videoconferencing or other distance communication hearing of children.
- Children are heard/questioned in child-friendly specialised settings/hearing room and can effectively participate in any hearing.
- Children are provided with child-friendly information about their rights and general aspects of the proceedings.

(*) Children: persons under 18 years of age.

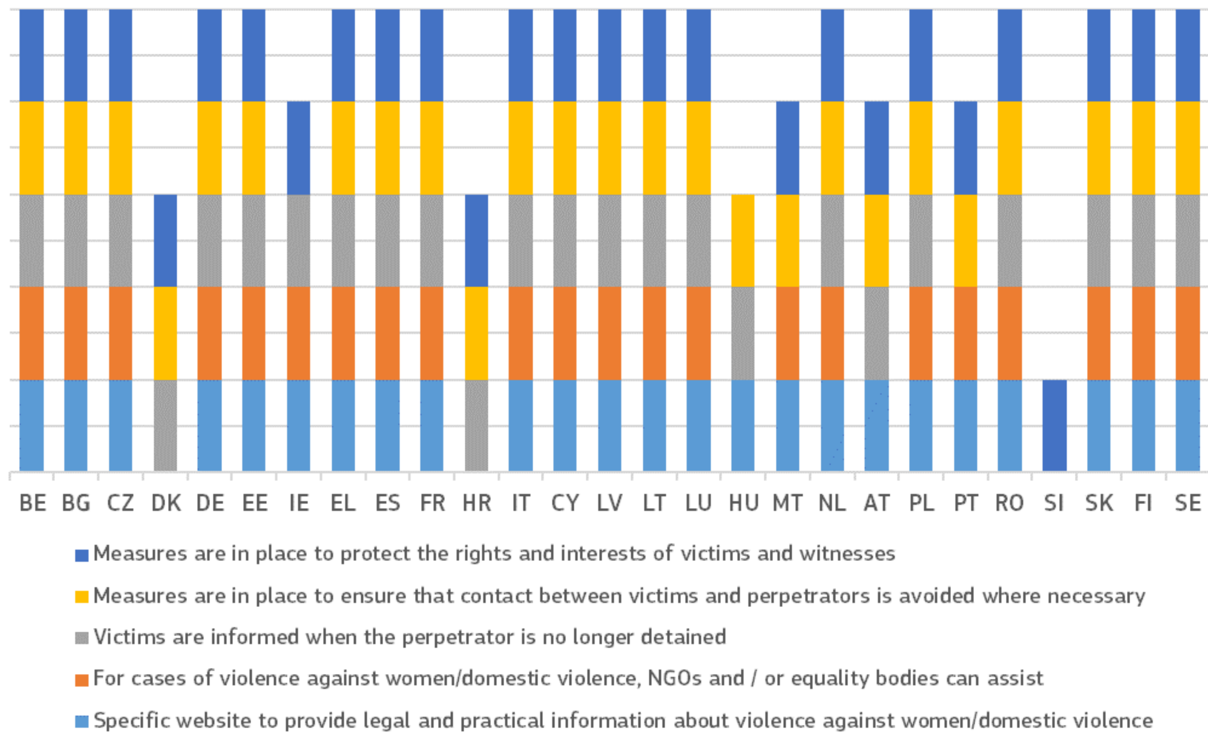
[82] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard extends the analysis of access to justice to victims of crime and victims of violence against women/domestic violence.

Figure 31: Legal remedies for victims of crime, 2024 *(source: European Commission ([83]))*

[83] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

Figure 32: Legal remedies for victims of violence against women/domestic violence, 2024 *(source: European Commission ([84]))*



2.2.2. Resources

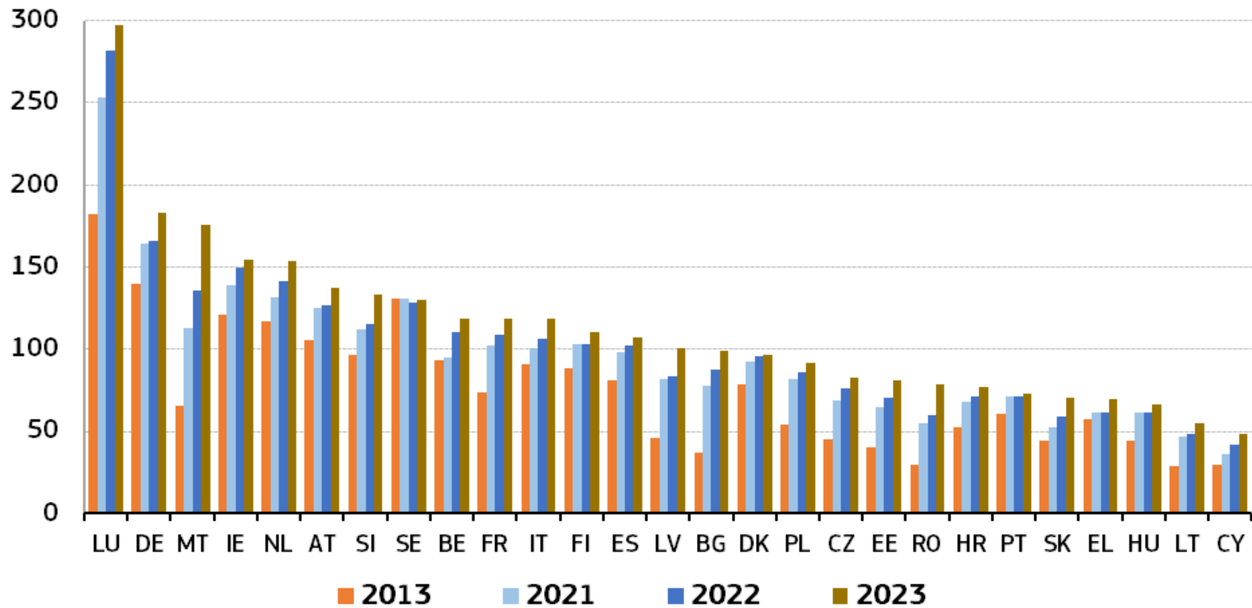
Sufficient resources are necessary for the justice system to work properly. This includes the necessary investments in physical and technical infrastructure and well qualified, trained and adequately paid staff of all kinds. Without adequate facilities, tools or staff with the required qualifications, skills and access to continuous training, the quality of proceedings and decisions is undermined.

– *Financial resources* –

The figures below show the actual government expenditure on the operation of the justice system (excluding prisons), both per inhabitant (Figure 33) and as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) (Figure 34).

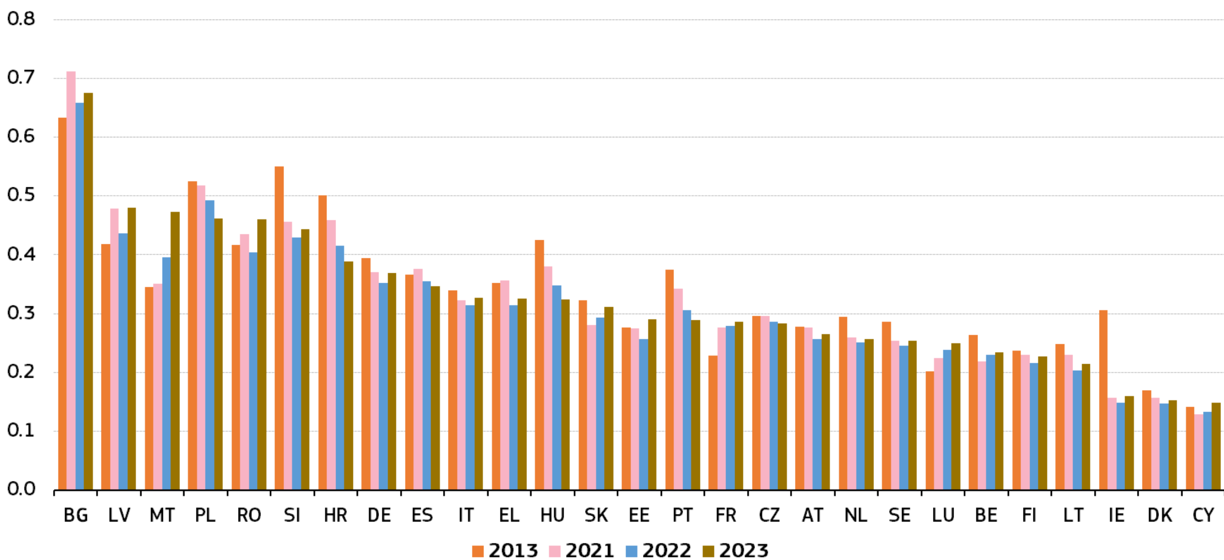
[84] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

Figure 33: General government total expenditure on law courts in EUR per inhabitant, 2013, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(source: Eurostat)*



(*) Member States are ordered according to their expenditure in 2023 (from highest to lowest). Data for 2022 for DE, ES, FR and SK are provisional. Data for BE, DE, ES, FR, PT and SK for 2023 are provisional. Data for PL have a break in series in 2022. Source: Eurostat, Gov_10a_exp

Figure 34: General government total expenditure on law courts as a percentage of GDP, 2013, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(source: Eurostat)*

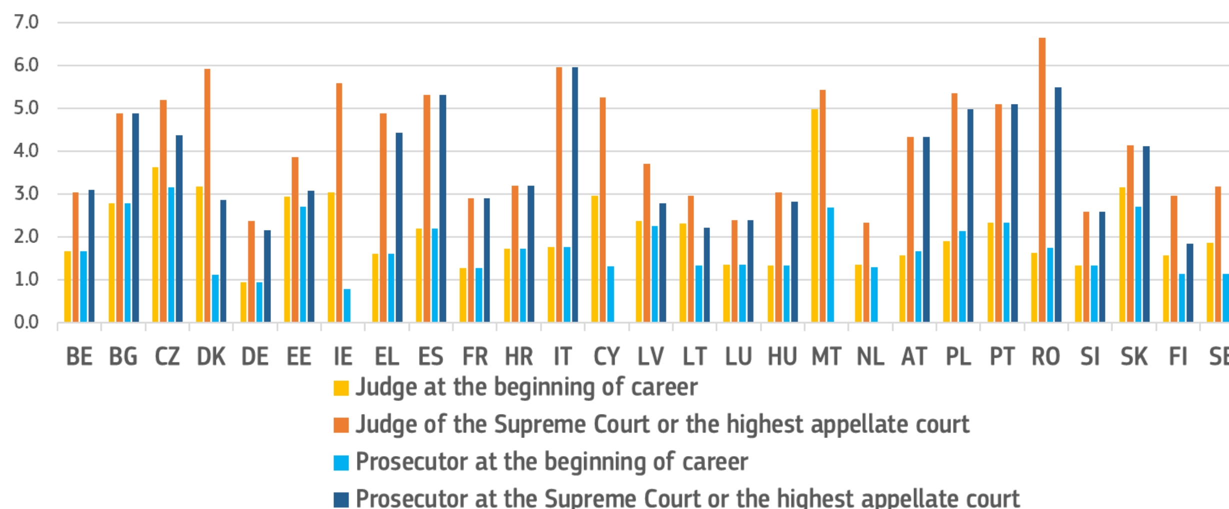


(*)Member States are ordered according to their expenditure in 2023 (from highest to lowest). Data for 2022 for DE, ES, FR and SK are provisional. Data for BE, DE, ES, FR, PT and SK for 2023 are provisional. Data for PL have a break in series in 2022. Source: Eurostat, Gov_10a_exp

Figure 35 presents the ratio of the annual salaries of judges and prosecutors to the average annual salary in the country. For each country, the bars present these ratios for judges and prosecutors at

the beginning of their respective careers and at their peak. By virtue of Article 19(1) TEU, Member States have to ensure that both their courts as a whole and the individual judges are independent in the fields covered by EU law. While temporary reduction in remuneration in the context of austerity measures has not been considered to violate this provision, the Court of Justice of the EU has stated that the receipt by members of the judiciary of a level of remuneration commensurate with the importance of the functions carried out constitutes an essential guarantee of judicial independence ([85]).

Figure 35: Ratio of <u>annual salaries of judges and prosecutors</u> to annual average gross salary in the country in 2023 (*) *(source: Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) study)*



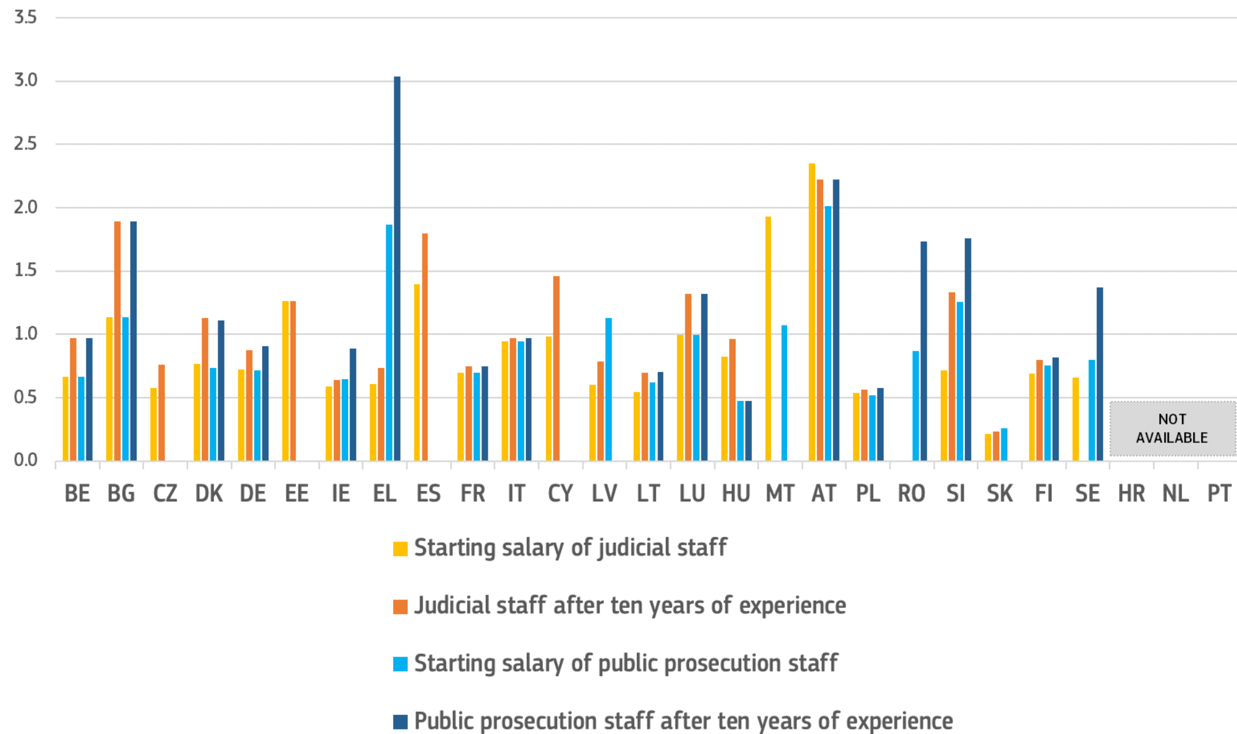
(*) Member States specific comments on the data are accessible in the CEPEJ study ([86]).

Figure 36 presents the ratio of annual salaries of judicial and prosecutorial expert staff compared to the average annual salary in the country. For each country, the first two bars present the ratios for judicial expert staff at the beginning of their career and after 10 years service, while the third and fourth bars present the ratios for prosecutorial expert staff at the beginning of their careers and after 10 years service.

[85] Judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union, Case C- 64/16 *Associação Sindical dos Juízes Portugueses*, (ECLI:EU:C:2018:117) para. 45, 'Like the protection against removal from office of the members of the body concerned (see, in particular, judgment of 19 September 2006, *Wilson*, C-506/04, EU:C:2006:587, paragraph 51), the receipt by those members of a level of remuneration commensurate with the importance of the functions they carry out constitutes a guarantee essential to judicial independence.' See also Judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union, Joined Cases C-146/23 and C-374/23 *Sąd Rejonowy w Białymstoku* and *Adoreikė* (ECLI:EU:C:2025:109), where the Court confirms that the detailed rules for determining the remuneration of judges must be objective, foreseeable, stable and transparent. The determination of that remuneration must have a legal basis and meet the criteria of objectivity, foreseeability, stability and transparency. Any derogation from the method for determining the remuneration must be justified by an objective of general interest.

[86] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/eu-justice-scoreboard_en#documents

Figure 36: Ratio of annual <u>salaries of judicial and prosecutorial expert staff</u> to annual full-time adjusted average gross salary in the country in 2023 (*) *(source: European Commission and Eurostat ([87]))*



*(*) Indicator developed in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems. Data on salaries refers to the minimum gross annual starting salary, in 2023, in euro, and minimum gross annual salary after 10 years of experience, in 2023, in euro. The gross salary is calculated before any welfare costs and taxes have been paid. Bonuses that are regularly paid to all staff irrespective of their personal circumstances are included (for example 13th salary that is paid without exception to staff in the court/public prosecution). Bonuses linked to personal circumstances (for example family allowances depending on the number of children) are excluded from the amount. Unless indicated otherwise, the minimum salary value from among the staff categories falling into the respective group of staff is used. The ratio was calculated against the Eurostat indicator 'Average full-time adjusted salary per employee', nama_10_fte, for 2023. Judicial staff refers to expert staff at courts of first instance contributing to the judicial proceedings/involved in the decision-making, such as assistant judges, Rechtspfleger, assistants to judges, auxilliares de justice, court registrars. Public prosecution staff refers to expert staff at the lowest level of prosecution offices contributing to the proceedings/involved in decision-making such as assistants of prosecutors, trainee prosecutors. The specific categories referred to by the individual Member States within these two broader groups and represented in the chart are, respectively; J: refers to judicial staff, P: refers to prosecutorial staff. **BE**: griffier/greffier (J), secretaris/secrétaire (P). The data provided include the holiday pay and end-of-year bonus. **BG**: judicial assistant (J), prosecutorial assistant (P). **CZ**: higher judicial officer (J), public prosecution staff (P). **DK**: assistant judge (J), prosecutor trainee (P). The assistant judge salary after 10 years of experience is based on average salary. **DE**: not indicated. **EE**: law clerk (J), assistant prosecutor (P). **IE**: judicial assistant (J), legal executive (P). **EL**: court registrar (J). **ES**: Letrados de la Administración de Justicia (J), Cuerpo de Auxilio Judicial (P). **FR** : legal assistant/clerks (J), legal assistant/clerks (P). **HR**: judicial assistant (J), assistant of prosecutor (P). **IT**: judicial court staff belonging to III area and economic segment F1(J), judicial court staff belonging to III area and economic segment F2(J), public prosecution staff belonging to III area and economic segment F1(P), public prosecution staff*

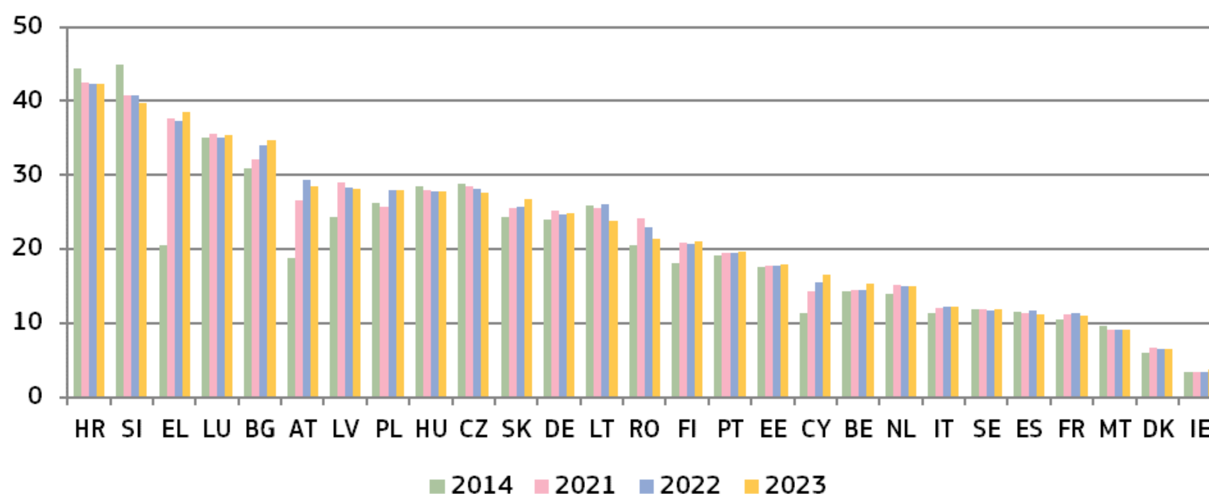
[87] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems and Eurostat. The source of data on annual average gross salary used for calculating the ratios in Figures 34 and 35 differ (in Figure 34, they are provided by CEPEJ, using information provided by their national correspondents, while in Figure 35, the source is Eurostat). Therefore, the ratios are not directly comparable between the two figures.

*belonging to III area and economic segment F2(P). **CY**: registrar (J). **LV**: assistant to judge (J), Lawyer-consultant, lawyer in the field of criminal law, lawyer – analyst (P). Judicial staff consists of assistants of judges only. There is no range of salaries in this category. In relation to the category 'assistant to a judge', the indicated data was the maximum salary in 2022. The salary for all assistants to judges are the same in first instance courts. For example, if the assistant to a judge receives the highest evaluation mark in the annual evaluation process, then they can already receive the maximum salary within the first working year. As regards the staff of the Prosecution Office, the data are an average of the salary for the indicated positions. Staff at both levels of the Prosecution Office has a set salary that does not depend on the years worked in the office. **LT**: Judicial assistants (senior judicial assistants) (J), assistants of prosecutors and assistants of the chief prosecutors (P). The salary values of judicial and public prosecution assistant and clerical staff is an average of specific salaries within a given category. **LU**: Référendaires: Employé A1(J), Référendaires: Employé A1(J). **HU**: Agent of the public prosecutor's office (P). **MT**: judicial assistant (J), trainee lawyer (P). **NL**: Not available due to missing Eurostat indicator of average full-time adjusted salary per employee. **AT**: Judges in training/legal assistants/auditors/judicial officials (Rechtspfleger) (J), prosecutor in training (P). The data represents statutory salary rates. Staff members or different salary groups are grouped together in one staff member category, with an average value given based on the statutory salary and renumeration rates. **PL**: assistant judge (J). The data are an average of specific salaries within a given category. **RO**: trainee prosecutor (P). RO only has the category 'trainee prosecutor' - not 'assistants of prosecutors' nor other categories of expert staff contributing to the proceedings/involved in decision-making. Consequently, only the starting salary for trainee prosecutors was provided. The category of judicial staff in courts of first instance did not exist in Romania in 2022, hence no data are provided for that category. **SI**: judicial assistant (J), senior judicial adviser (P). **SK**: assistant (J), legal trainee (P). **FI**: trainee judge (J), prosecutor's assistant (P). **SE**: law clerk step 1(J), trainee public prosecutor (P).*

– Human resources –

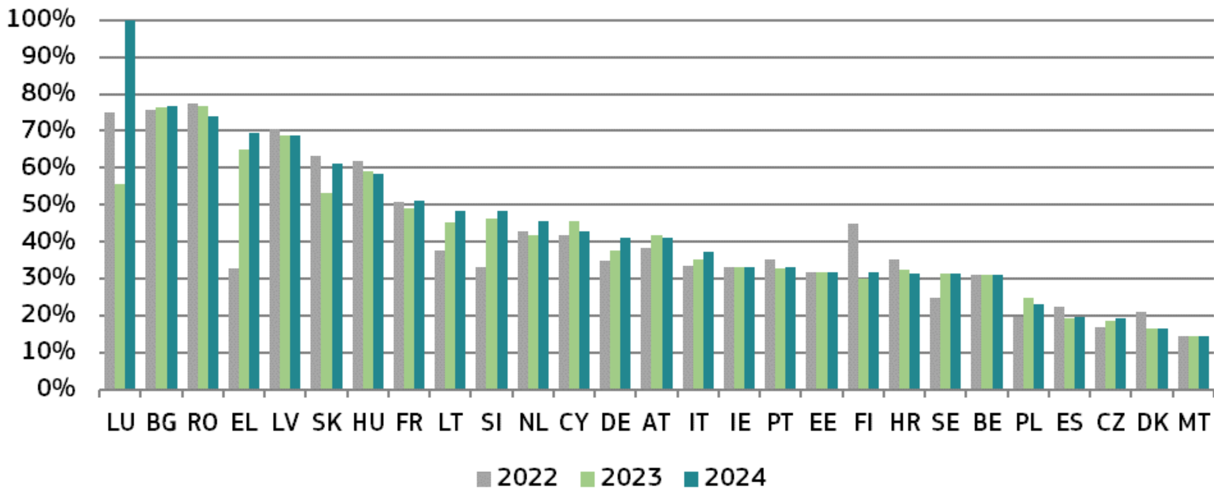
Adequate human resources are essential for the quality of a justice system. Diversity among judges, including gender balance, adds complementary knowledge, skills and experience and reflects the reality of society.

Figure 37: Number of judges, 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(per 100 000 inhabitants) (source: Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) study)*



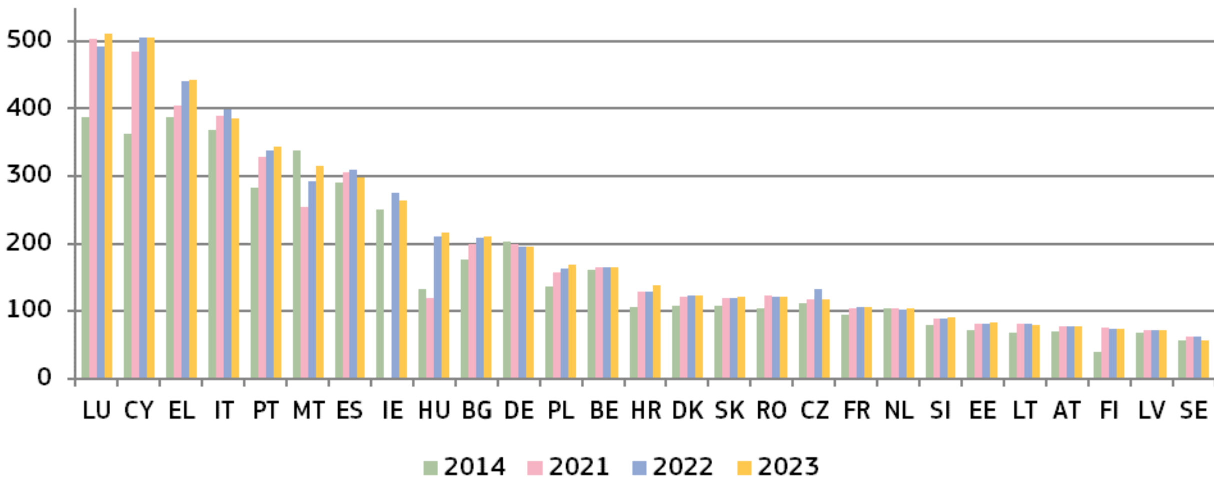
*(*) This category consists of judges working full-time, according to the CEPEJ methodology. It does not include the Rechtspfleger/court clerks that exist in some Member States. **EL**: since 2016, data on the number of professional judges include all the ranks for criminal and civil justice as well as administrative judges. **IT**: Regional audit commissions, local tax commissions and military courts are not taken into consideration. Administrative justice has been taken into account since 2018. **AT**: data on administrative justice have been part of the data since 2016.*

Figure 38: Proportion of female professional Supreme Court judges 2022 – 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([88]))*



(*) The data are sorted by 2024 values, from the highest to the lowest.

Figure 39: Number of lawyers, 2014, 2021 – 2023 (*) *(per 100 000 inhabitants) (source: Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) study)*



*(*) According to the CEPEJ methodology, a lawyer is a person qualified and authorised by national law to plead and act on behalf of their clients; to engage in the practice of law; to appear before the courts or advise and represent their clients in legal matters (Recommendation Rec (2000)21 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the freedom of exercise of the profession of lawyer). **DE**: No distinction is made between different groups of lawyers in Germany. **FI**: Since 2015, the number of lawyers provided includes both the number of lawyers working in the private sector and the number of lawyers working in the public sector.*

[88] European Institute for Gender Equality, Gender Statistics Database: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/wmidm_jud_natcrt__wmid_natcrt_supcrt/datatable

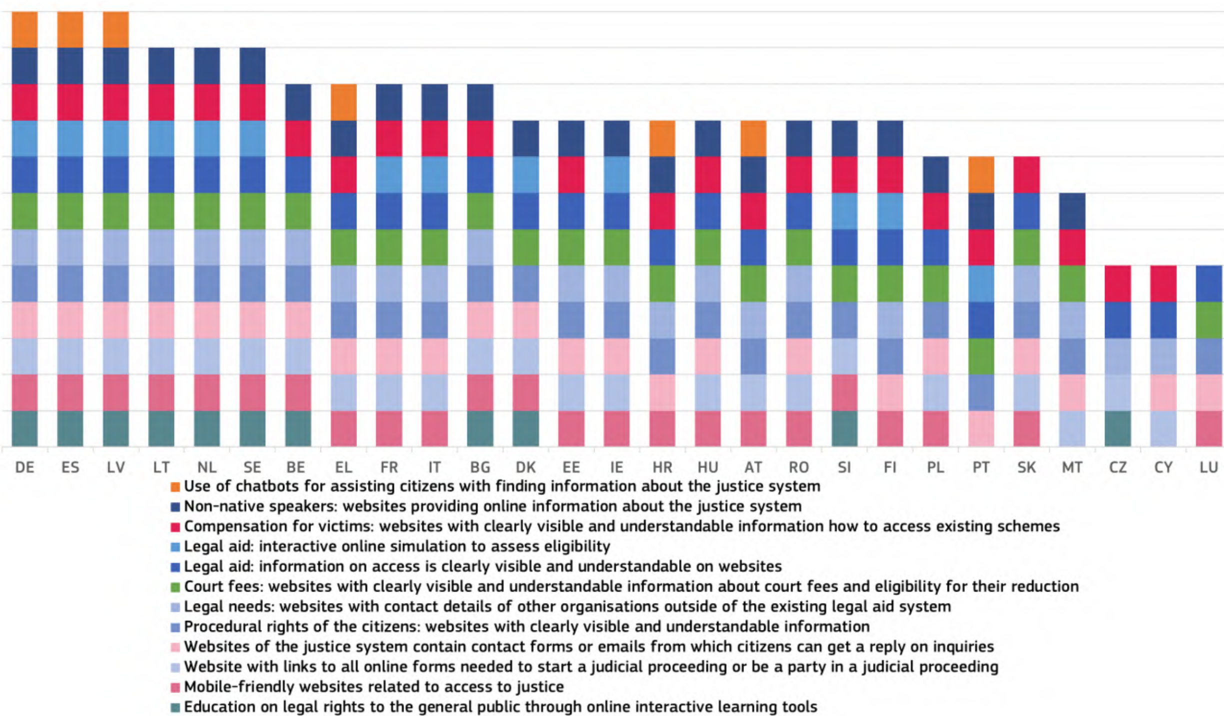
2.2.3. Digitalisation

The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) can strengthen Member States' justice systems and make them more accessible, efficient, resilient and ready to face current and future challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted a number of challenges affecting the functioning of the judiciary and shown the need for national justice systems to further improve their digitalisation.

Earlier editions of the EU Justice Scoreboard provided comparative data on certain aspects of ICT in justice systems. As announced in the Commission's Communication on the digitalisation of justice in the EU of 2 December 2020 ([89]), the Scoreboard has been substantially augmented with further data on digitalisation in the Member States. This should allow for more in-depth monitoring of progress areas and outstanding challenges.

Citizen-friendly justice requires that information about national judicial systems is not only easily accessible but is also tailored to specific groups of society that would otherwise have difficulties in accessing the information, including people with disabilities. Figure 40 shows the availability of online information and specific public services that can help people access justice.

Figure 40: Availability of online information about the judicial system for the general public, 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([90]))*



*(*) **DE**: Each federal state as well as the federal level decide individually which information to provide online.*

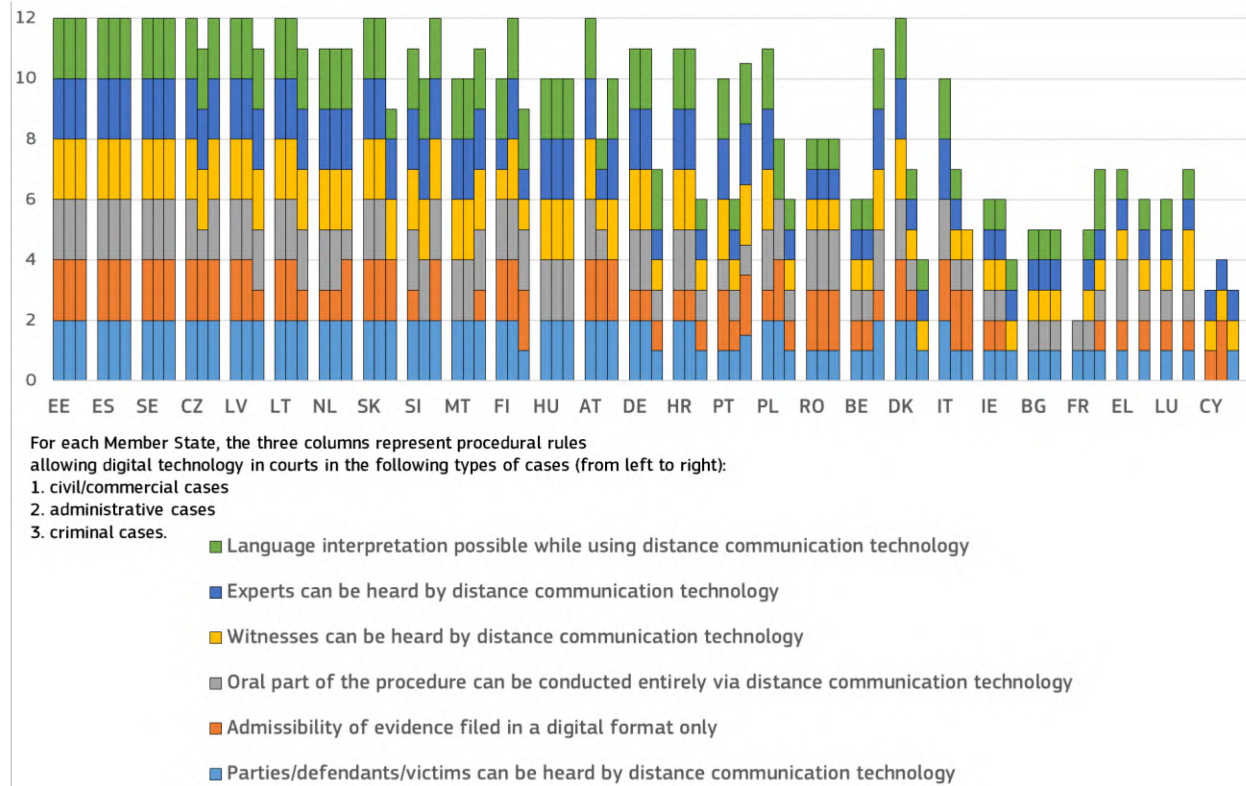
[89] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 'Digitalisation of justice in the European Union: A toolbox of opportunities' COM(2020) 710 and accompanying SWD(2020)540.

[90] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

– Digital-ready rules –

The use of digital solutions in civil/commercial, administrative and criminal cases often requires appropriate regulation in national procedural rules. Figure 41 illustrates the possibilities set out by law for various actors to use distance communication technology (such as videoconferencing) for court and court related procedures, and reflects the current situation on the admissibility of digital evidence.

Figure 41 : <u>Procedural rules allowing digital technology in courts</u> in civil/commercial, administrative and criminal cases, 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([91])*



(*) Maximum possible: 12 points. For each criterion, two points were given if the possibility exists in all civil/commercial, administrative and criminal cases, respectively (in criminal cases, the possibility of hearing the parties was split to cover both defendants and victims). The points are divided by two when the possibility does not exist in all cases. For those Member States that do not distinguish between civil/commercial and administrative cases, the same number of points has been given for both areas. ***EL, LU****: none for administrative cases.*

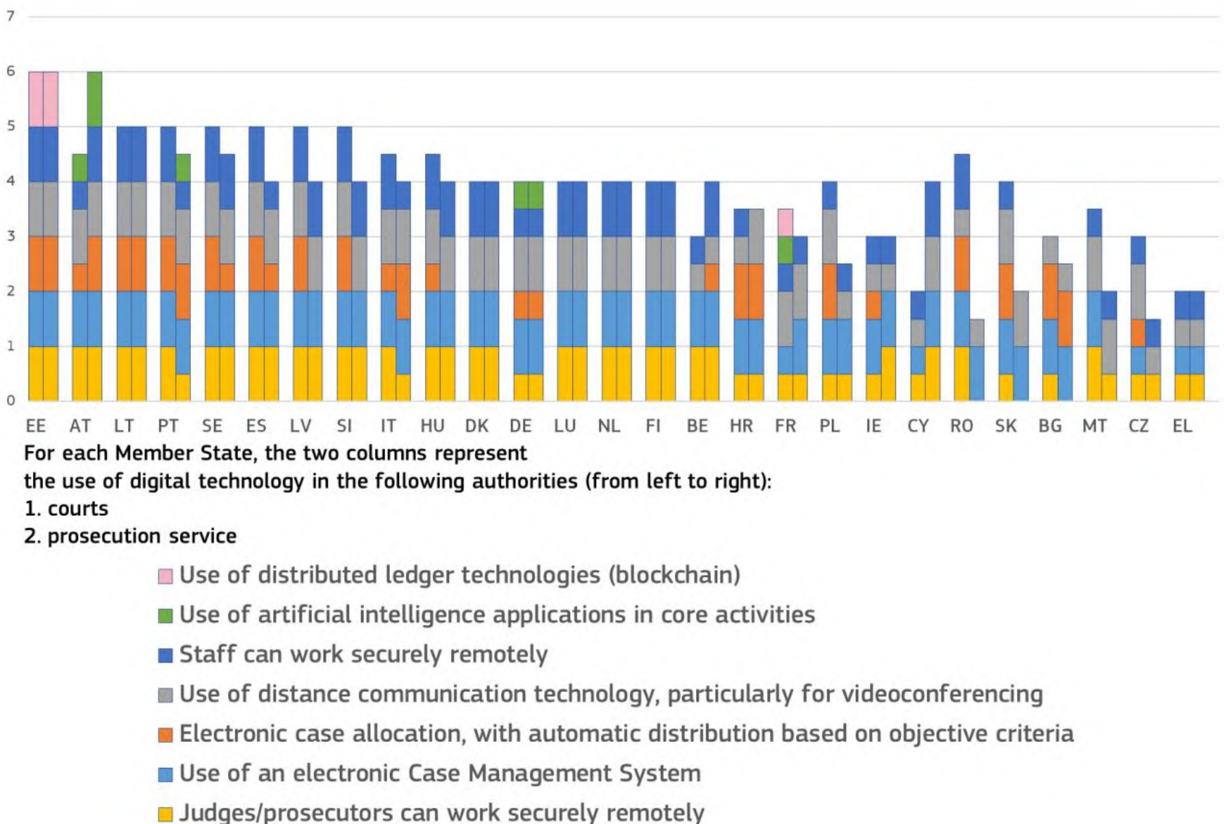
[91] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

– Use of digital tools –

Beyond digital-ready procedural rules, courts and prosecution services need to have appropriate tools and infrastructure in place for distance communication and secure remote access to the workplace (Figure 42). Adequate infrastructure and equipment is also needed for secure electronic communication between courts/prosecution services and legal professionals and institutions (Figures 43 and 44).

ICT, including innovative technology, plays an important role in supporting the work of judicial authorities. It therefore contributes significantly to the quality of justice systems. The availability of various digital tools at the disposal of judges, prosecutors and judicial staff can streamline work processes, ensure fair workload allocation and lead to a significant time reduction.

Figure 42: Use of digital technology by courts and prosecution services, 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([92]))*



(*) Maximum possible: 7 points. For each criterion, one point was given if courts and prosecution services, respectively, use a given technology and 0.5 point was awarded when the technology is not always used by them.

Secure electronic communication can contribute to improving the quality of justice systems. The possibility for courts to communicate electronically between themselves and with legal professionals and other institutions can streamline processes and reduce the need for paper-based communication and physical presence. This would lead to a reduction in the length of pre-trial activities and court proceedings.

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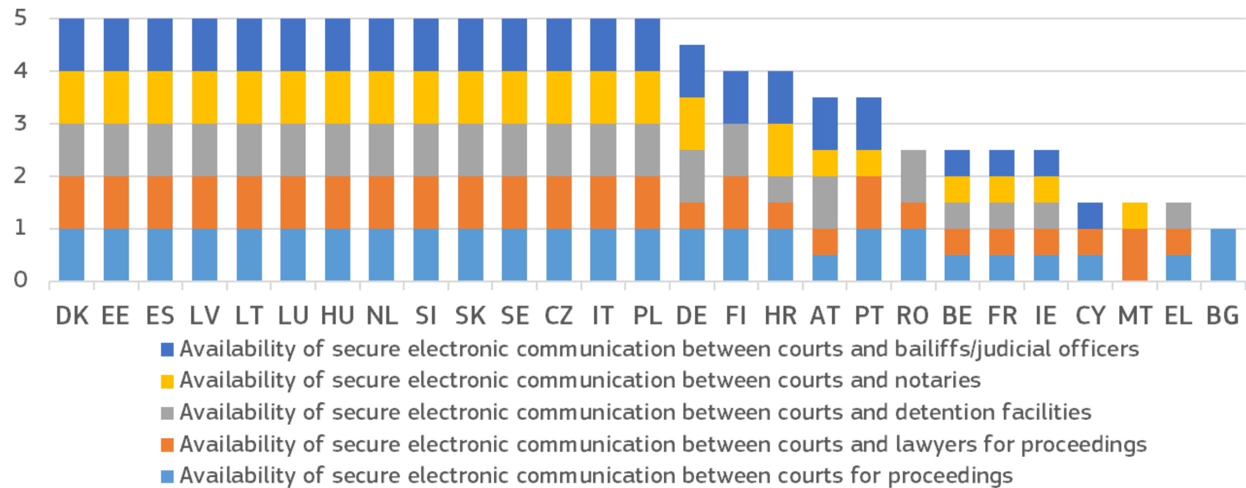
[92] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

Figure 43: <u>Courts: electronic communication tools</u>, 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([93]))*

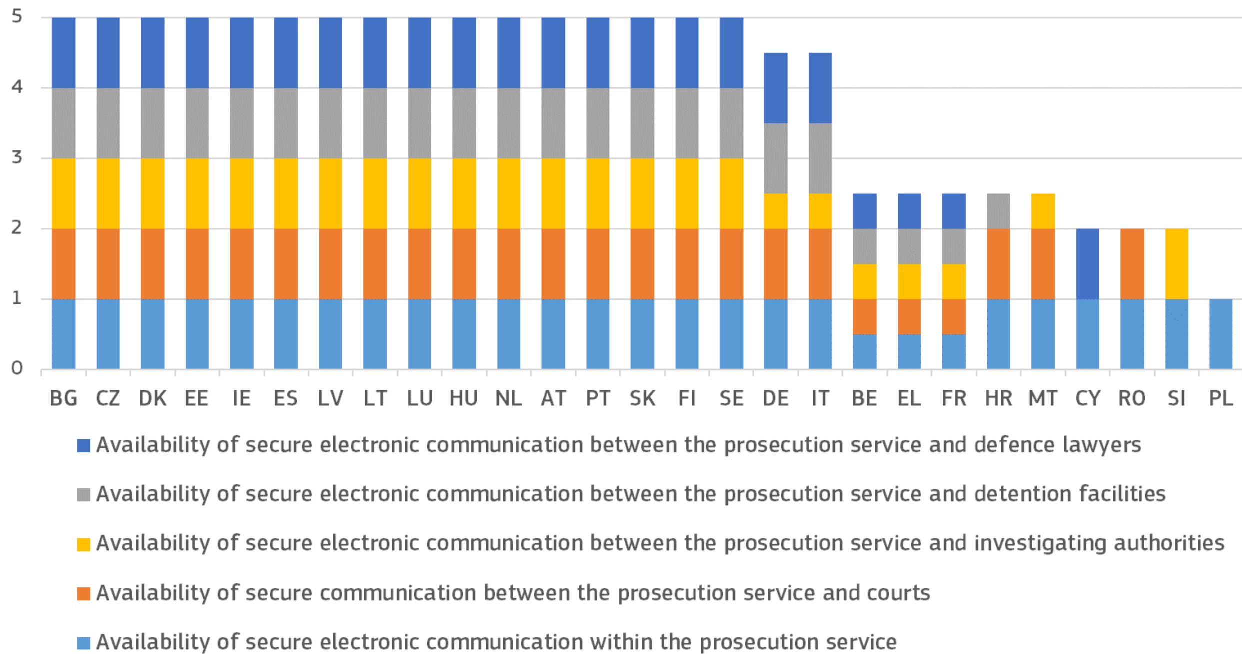


(*) Maximum possible: 5 points. For each criterion, one point was given if secure electronic communication is available for courts. 0.5 was awarded when the possibility does not exist in all cases. ***FI****: the tasks of notaries do not relate to courts. Therefore, there is no reason to provide them with secure connection.*

Prosecution services are essential for the functioning of the criminal justice system. Access to a secure electronic channel of communication could facilitate their work and thus improve the quality of court proceedings. The possibility for secure electronic communication between prosecution services and investigating authorities, defence lawyers and courts would enable a more expedient and efficient preparation of the proceedings before the court.

[93] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

Figure 44: Prosecution service: electronic communication tools, 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([94]))*



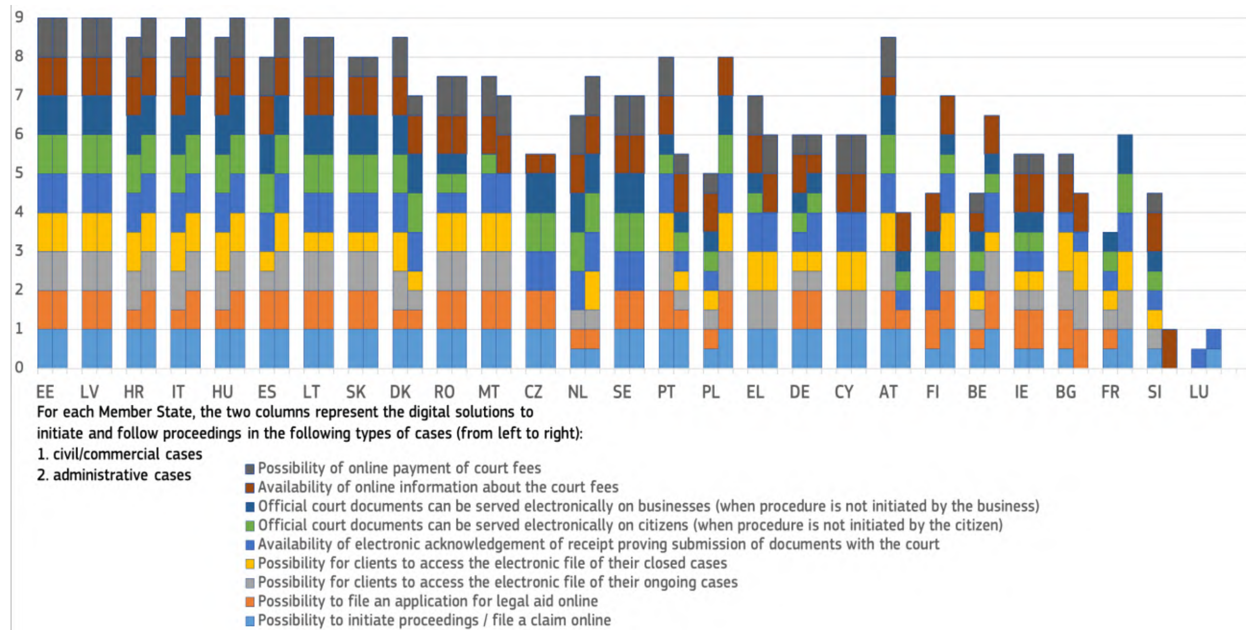
(*) Maximum possible: 5 points. For each criterion, one point was given if secure electronic communication is available for prosecution services. 0.5 was awarded when the possibility does not exist in all cases. Availability of electronic communication tools within prosecution service includes communication with lawyers employed by the prosecution service.

– *Online access to courts* –

The ability to carry out specific steps in a judicial procedure electronically is an important aspect of the quality of justice systems. The electronic submission of claims, the possibility to monitor and advance proceedings online or serve documents electronically can noticeably facilitate access to justice for citizens and businesses (or their legal representatives) and reduce delays and costs. The availability of such digital public services would help bring courts one step closer to citizens and businesses, and by extension increase public trust in the justice system.

[94] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

Figure 45: Digital solutions to initiate and follow proceedings in civil/commercial and administrative cases, 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([95]))*

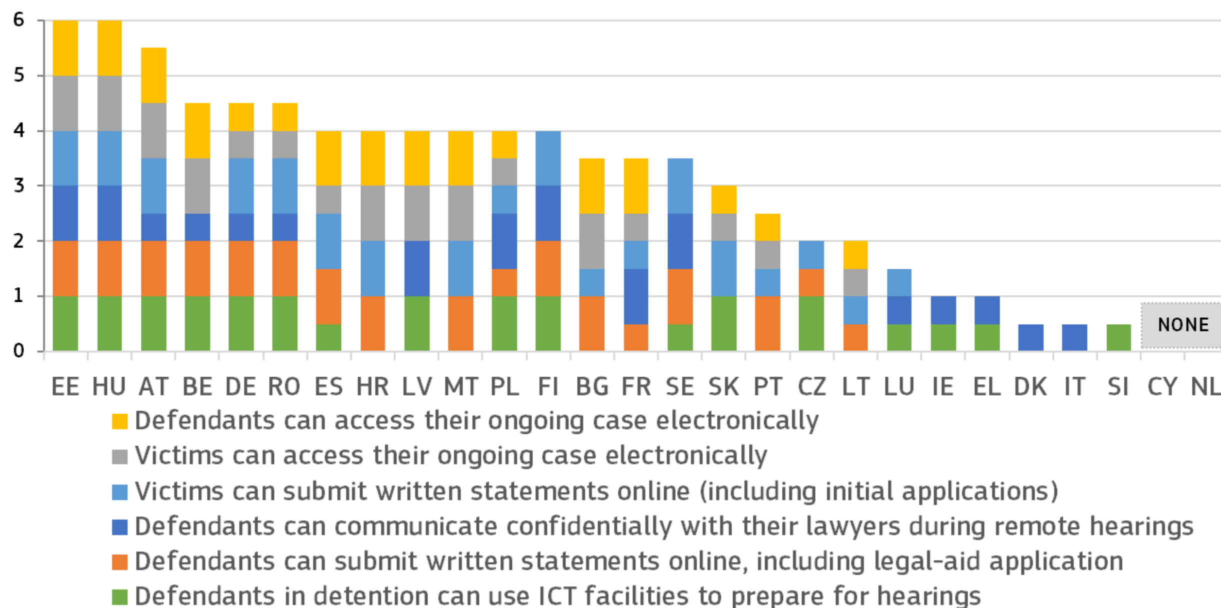


(*) Maximum possible: 9 points. For each criterion, one point was given if the possibility exists in all civil/commercial and administrative cases, respectively. 0.5 point was awarded when the possibility does not exist in all cases. For those Member States that do not distinguish civil/commercial and administrative cases, the same number of points has been given for both areas.

The use of digital tools for conducting and following court proceedings in criminal cases can also help guarantee the rights of victims and defendants. For example, digital solutions can enable confidential remote communication between defendants and their lawyers, allow defendants in detention to prepare for their hearing and help victims of crime avoid secondary victimisation.

[95] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

Figure 46: Digital solutions to conduct and follow court proceedings in criminal cases, 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission ([96]))*



(*) Maximum possible: 6 points. For each criterion, one point was given if the possibility exists in all criminal cases. 0.5 point was awarded when the possibility does not exists in all cases.

– Access to judgments –

Ensuring online access to judgments increases the transparency of justice systems, helps citizens and businesses understand their rights and can contribute to consistency in case-law. Appropriate arrangements for publishing judicial decisions online are essential for creating user-friendly search facilities ([97]) that make case-law more accessible to legal professionals and the general public, including persons with disabilities. Seamless access to case law and its easy reuse make the justice system algorithm-friendly, enabling innovative 'legal tech' applications that support practitioners.

The online publication of court decisions requires balancing a variety of interests, within the boundaries set by legal and policy frameworks. The General Data Protection Regulation ([98]) fully applies to the processing of personal data by courts. When assessing what data to make public, a fair balance has to be struck between the right to data protection and the obligation to publicise court decisions to ensure the transparency of the justice system. This is particularly true when there is a prevailing public interest that justifies the disclosure of those data. In many countries, the law or practice requires the anonymisation or pseudonymisation ([99]) of judicial decisions before

[96] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

[97] See *Best practice guide for managing Supreme Courts*, under the project Supreme Courts as guarantee for effectiveness of judicial systems, p. 29.

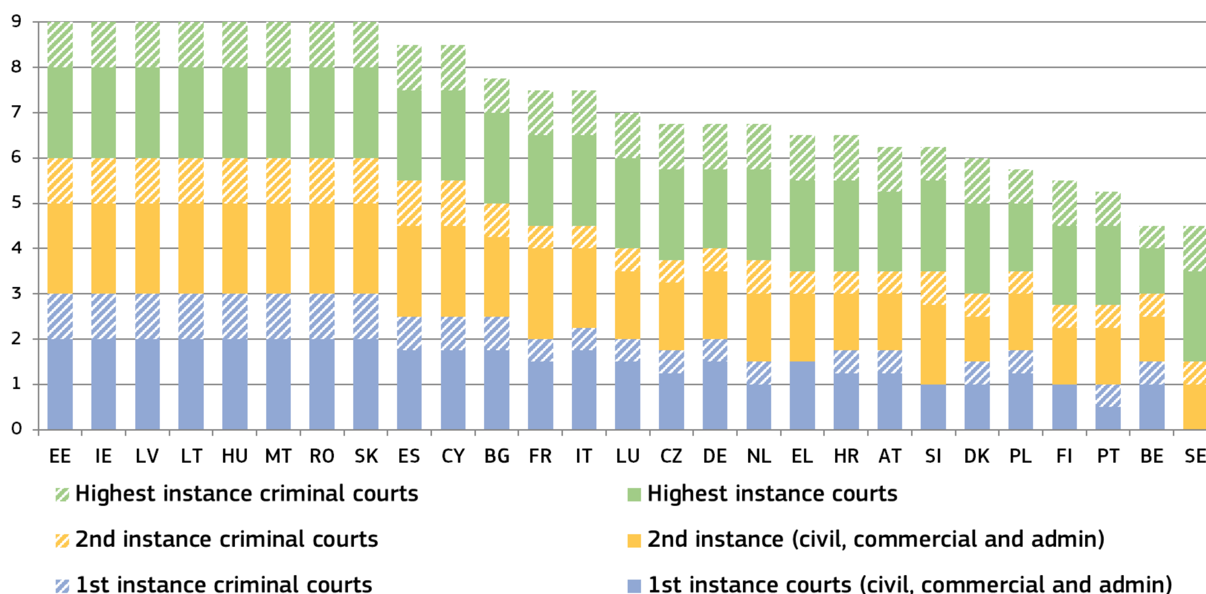
[98] Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1).

[99] Anonymisation/pseudonymisation is more efficient if assisted by an algorithm. However, human supervision is needed since the algorithms do not understand context.

publication, either systematically or upon request. Data produced by the judiciary are also governed by EU legislation on open data and the reuse of public sector information ([100]).

The availability of judicial decisions in a machine-readable format ([101]), as displayed in Figure 47, facilitates an algorithm-friendly justice system ([102]).

Figure 47 : Online access to published judgments by the general public, 2023 (*) *(civil/commercial, administrative and criminal cases, all instances) (source: European Commission ([103]))*



(*) Maximum possible: 9 points. For each court instance, one point was given if all judgments are available for civil/commercial and administrative and criminal cases respectively, 0.75 points when most judgments (more than 50% are available) and 0.5 points when some judgments (less than 50%) are available. For Member States with only two court instances, points have been given for three court instances by mirroring the respective higher instance court of the non-existing instance. For those Member States that do not distinguish the two areas of law (civil/commercial and administrative), the same number of points has been given for both areas. ***BE****: For civil and criminal cases, each court is in charge of deciding on the publication of its own judgments.* ***DE****: Each federal state decides on the online availability of first instance judgments.* ***AT****: For first and second instance, judges decide which judgments are published. Decisions of the Supreme Court that reject an appeal without substantial reasoning are not published. Decisions of the Supreme Administrative Court taken by a single judge are published if the judge concerned decides to publish them. Furthermore, decisions only containing legal issues where there is already continuous jurisprudence of the Supreme Administrative Court and non-complicated decisions concerning discontinuance of proceedings are not published.* ***NL****: Courts*

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[100] Directive 2003/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 on the reuse of public sector information (OJ L 345, 31.12.2003, p. 90) and Directive (EU) 2019/1024 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on open data and the reuse of public sector information (OJ L 172, 26.6.2019, p. 56).

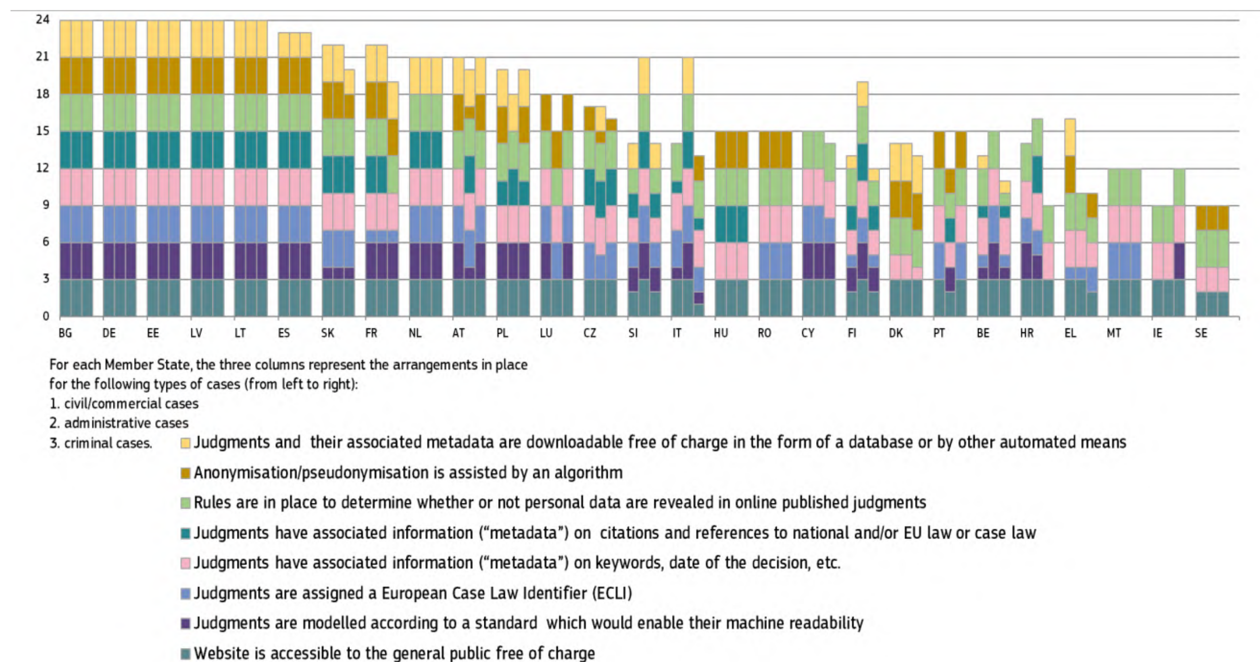
[101] Judgments modelled according to standards (e.g. Akoma Ntoso) and their associated metadata are downloadable free of charge in the form of a database or by other automated means (e.g. Application Programming Interface).

[102] See also Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A European strategy for data, COM(2020) 66 final, Commission White Paper on Artificial Intelligence – A European approach to excellence and trust, COM(2020) 65 final, and Conclusions of the Council and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Best Practices regarding the Online Publication of Court Decisions (OJ C 362, 8.10.2018, p. 2).

[103] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

decide on publication according to published criteria. ***PT****: A commission within the court decides on the publication.* ***SI****: procedural decisions with little or no significance for case law are not published; from decisions in cases which are identical in substance (e.g. bulk cases), only the leading decision is published (together with the list of case files with the same content). Individual higher courts decide which judgments can be published.* ***SK****: Decisions on several types of civil cases such as inheritance matters or determining paternity are not published.* ***FI****: Courts decide which judgments are published.*

Figure 48 : Arrangements for producing machine-readable judicial decisions, 2024 (*) *(civil/commercial, administrative and criminal cases, all instances) (source: European Commission ([104]))*



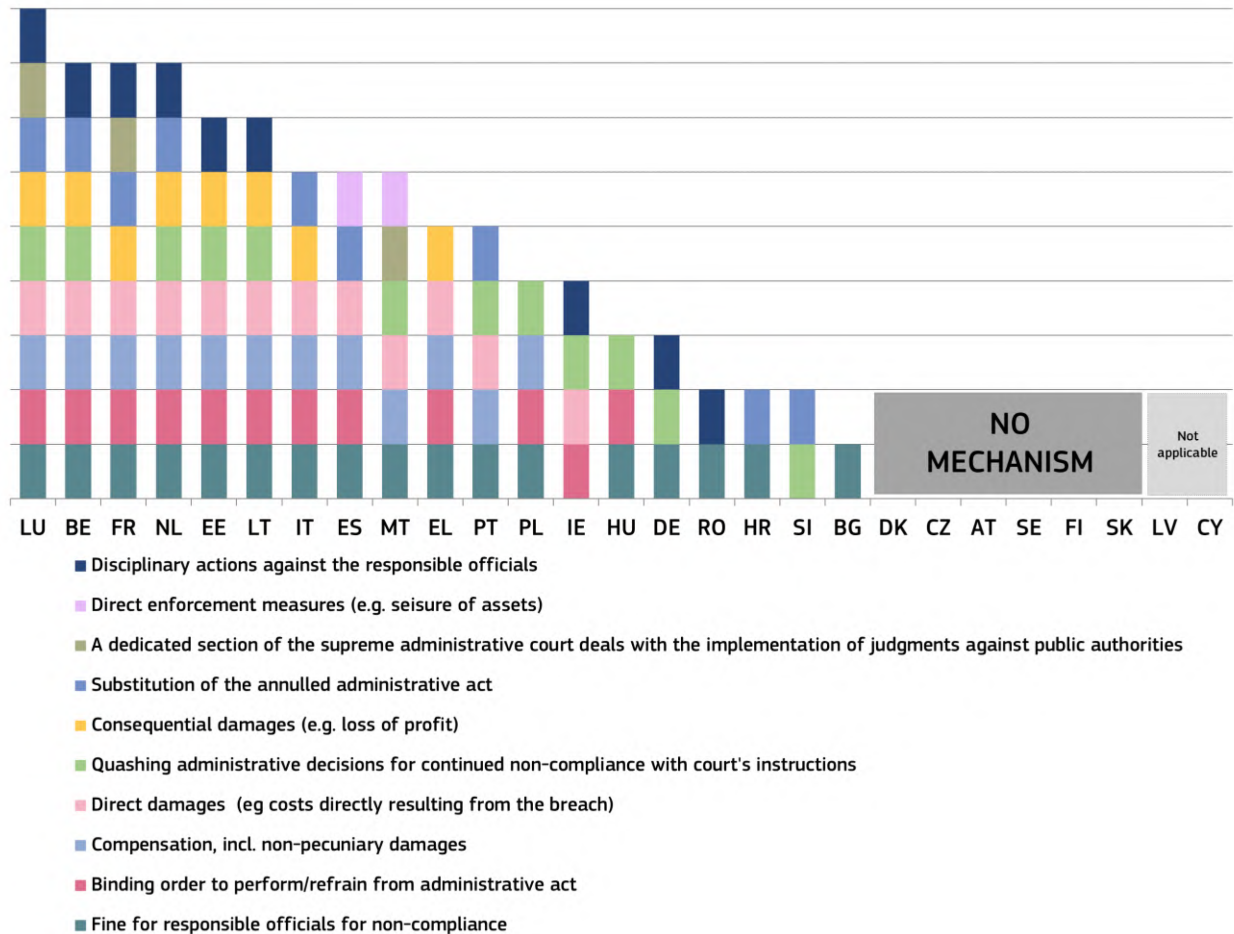
(*) Maximum possible: 24 points per type of case. For each of the three instances (first, second, final) one point can be given if all judicial decisions are covered. If only some judicial decisions are covered at a given instance, only half a point is awarded. Where a Member State has only two instances, points have been given for three instances by mirroring the respective higher instance as the non-existing instance. For those Member States that do not distinguish between administrative and civil/commercial cases, the same points have been allocated for both areas of law. ***ES****: The use of the General Council for the Judiciary (CGPJ) database for commercial purposes, or the massive download of information is not allowed. The reuse of this information for developing databases or for commercial purposes must follow the procedure and conditions laid down by the CGPJ through its Judicial Documentation Centre.* ***IE****: anonymisation of judgments is done in family law, child care and other areas where statute requires or a judge directs the identities of parties or persons not to be disclosed.*

[104] 2024 data collected in cooperation with the group of contact persons on national justice systems.

– Implementation of judgments –

In a State governed by the rule of law, public institutions must comply with judgments and enforce them in a timely manner. The effective enforcement of binding judicial decisions is also essential to ensure public trust in the independence and authority of the judiciary ([105]). Figure 49, for the first time, presents mechanisms that are in place to assist in implementing judgments by supreme administrative courts. The figure presents which mechanisms are in place in each Member State and does not assess how effective they are or how often they are used in practice.

Figure 49: Judicial mechanisms in place to ensure the implementation of administrative court judgments, 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission with the ACA-Europe ([106]))*



[105] CCJE Opinion No 13 (2010) on the role of judges in the enforcement of judicial decisions.

[106] The 2024 data are collected through replies by ACA-Europe members to a questionnaire.

2.2.4. Summary on the quality of justice systems

Easy access, sufficient resources, effective assessment tools and digitalisation all contribute to a high-quality justice system. The public and businesses expect high-quality decisions from an effective justice system. The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard makes a comparative analysis of these factors.

Accessibility

The 2025 Scoreboard looks again at a number of elements that contribute to a people-friendly justice system:

1) The **availability of legal aid** and the **level of court fees** have a major impact on access to justice, in particular for people living in poverty or at risk of poverty. Figure 23 shows that in three Member States, people whose income is below the Eurostat poverty threshold cannot receive legal aid. The level of court fees (Figure 24) has remained largely stable since 2016, although in four Member States court fees were higher than in 2023, in particular for low-value claims. The burden of court fees continues to be proportionally higher for low-value claims. Difficulties in claiming legal aid combined with high court fees in three Member States could discourage people living in poverty from accessing justice. The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard presents, for the second time, the **rate of legal aid paid to criminal defence lawyers** in a specific criminal case, showing that a wide disparity exists between Member States in the amounts lawyers would be paid from the public budget (Figure 25).
2) The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard continues to analyse the ways in which Member States promote voluntary use of **alternative dispute resolution methods (ADR)** (Figure 26), including the possibility of using digital technologies. In 2024, the overall promotion effort increased, with six Member States reporting more means of promotion, in particular for ADR methods in consumer disputes. The number of ways used to promote ADR methods for administrative disputes is still lower than for other disputes, but has also increased since 2023.
3) The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard takes stock again of specific arrangements for **access to justice to persons at risk of discrimination and older persons.** Figure 27 shows that 18 Member States have taken steps to raise awareness among persons at risk of discrimination on where to obtain legal information and assistance. In 16 Member States, steps are taken to make legal aid more accessible for older persons, and in 17 Member States, NGOs or equality bodies have the right to initiate or participate in judicial proceedings on behalf of or in support of one or several victims. In 20 Member States, there are solutions in place to help older persons participate in court proceedings, including receiving court communication by post.
4) For the second time, the 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard presents **specific selected measures for representative actions** protecting the collective interests of consumers. Figure 28 shows that 23 Member States have at least one such measure in place. From among the selected measures, specific arrangements to inform consumers about the actions and the outcomes and measures to train judges in effective management of representative actions are the most widespread, being in place in 12 Member States.
5) Figure 29 shows that all Member States have some **specific arrangements for child-friendly justice and proceedings, for both civil and criminal/juvenile justice proceedings**. 11 Member States have all 9 of the monitored specific arrangements in place, including, for

example, a website specifically designed to be child-friendly and helplines to provide information about the justice system or measures in place to hold children separately from adults when they are deprived of their liberty. In all Member States, the privacy and personal data of children involved in judicial or non-judicial proceedings are protected in accordance with national law. Furthermore, all Member States have child-friendly specialised settings/hearing rooms for children to be heard. A mapping of **specific arrangements for children involved in criminal proceedings as victims or suspects and accused persons** (Figure 30) shows, for example, that 26 Member States provide information about the victim's or suspect's rights and the proceedings in a child-friendly way and in 15 Member States, any form of deprivation of liberty of children is used as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

6) Figure 31 shows that all Member States have some **specific arrangements for victims of crime.** Most Member States have most of the monitored specific arrangements in place, including, for example, providing financial assistance in cases where the offender does not pay the adjudicated compensation or the possibility for the victims to request a review of decisions to provide a protection measure or interpretation or translation. In case of violation of their rights within the criminal proceedings, in most Member States victims have rights to protection measures, to legal aid, or to be heard. Figure 32 shows that all Member States have some **specific arrangements for victims of violence against women/domestic violence.** In almost all Member States, measures are in place to protect the rights and interests of victims and witnesses and to ensure that contact between victims and perpetrators is avoided when necessary. In almost all Member States, NGOs and/or equality bodies can assist and/or support the victims.

Resources

High-quality justice systems in Member States depend on sufficient financial and human resources. This requires appropriate investment in physical and technical infrastructure, initial and continuing training, and diversity among judges, including gender balance. The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard shows the following.

7) In terms of **financial resources**, overall in 2023 general government spending on law courts increased in all Member States taking into account the number of inhabitants, while it decreased in 6 Member States as compared to GDP. It still shows significant differences between Member States in spending levels, both per inhabitant and as a percentage of GDP (Figures 33 and 34).

8) The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard continues to explore the situation in the Member States as regards salaries in the justice system. It presents, for the third time, the ratio of annual **salaries of judges and prosecutors** to the average annual salary in the country (Figure 35). For the second time, it also presents the **ratio of annual salaries of judicial and prosecutorial expert staff** to the average annual salary in the country (Figure 36). Both figures show wide-ranging differences among the Member States. Moreover, Figure 36 reveals that in 16 Member States, judicial expert staff at the beginning of their careers receive less than the national average salary. In 13 Member States, this is also the case of public prosecution expert staff.

9) **Women** still account for fewer than 50% of judges at supreme court level in 19 Member

States (Figure 38), while in 8 Member States at least half the judges at supreme court level are female. Figures for the three-year period from 2021 to 2024 show diverging levels and trends between Member States.

Digitalisation

Since 2021, the EU Justice Scoreboard has included a large, detailed section on aspects related to the digitalisation of justice. Although Member States already use digital solutions in different contexts and to varying degrees, there is significant room for improvement.

10) All 27 Member States provide some **online information about their judicial system**, including websites with clear information on accessing legal aid, on court fees and on eligibility criteria for reduced fees (Figure 40). The situation remains stable compared to last year but some differences still exist between Member States as regards information and the degree to which it responds to people's needs. For example, 11 Member States provide education on legal rights to the general public through online interactive learning tools. 26 Member States provide clearly visible and understandable information on legal aid.
11) Six Member States have **digital-ready procedural rules** (Figure 41), which allow fully or mostly for the use of distance communication and for the admissibility of evidence in digital format only. In 23 Member States, this is possible only in a limited number of situations. Nonetheless, there has been steady overall progress in this regard since 2020.
12) Figure 42 reveals the **use of digital technology by courts and prosecution services**. It shows that Member States do not fully use the potential allowed by their procedural rules (cf. Figure 41). Member States' courts, prosecutors and court staff already have various digital tools at their disposal, such as case-management systems, videoconferencing systems and teleworking arrangements. However, further progress could still be achieved in electronic case allocation systems, with automatic distribution based on objective criteria.
13) Courts in all Member States have some **secure electronic tools for communication** at their disposal although only 14 Member States have such tools for all types of communication that are monitored and for all cases (Figure 43). Five Member States still lack tools for digital communication with notaries, detention facilities or bailiffs/judicial officers. All Member States also provide for **secure electronic communication within the prosecution services** (Figure 44). All Member States except for one provide for secure electronic communication between prosecution services and courts. Five Member States still lack tools for electronic communication between the prosecution services and defence lawyers.
14) In civil/commercial and administrative cases, 24 Member States provide individuals and businesses (or their legal representatives) with **online access to their ongoing or closed cases** (Figure 45), albeit to varying degrees. As regards digital solutions to conduct and follow court proceedings in criminal cases, Figure 46 shows that victims can submit written statements online either partly or fully in 18 Member States. However, in 11 Member States, defendants and victims do not have the possibility to follow or pursue their case electronically.
15) **Online access to court judgments** (Figure 47) has remained stable compared to last year. It is mainly judgments from the highest instances that are made accessible online.
16) As in previous years, the 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard analyses **arrangements for producing machine-readable judicial decisions** (Figure 48). All Member States have at least some

arrangements in place for civil/commercial, administrative and criminal cases, although there is considerable variation between them. In general, there is a tendency to introduce more arrangements, particularly for downloading the judgments free of charge (databases and other automated solutions), for modelling judgments to make them machine-readable, or for anonymising/pseudonymising judgments using algorithms. In 2023, 9 Member States reported improvement compared to the previous year, while the situation in 10 Member States remained stable. Justice systems with arrangements for modelling judgments in line with standards to make them machine-readable seem to have the potential to achieve better results in the future.

17) For the first time, the 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard presents data on **mechanisms to enforce administrative judgments** (Figure 49), at the level of supreme administrative jurisdictions. The majority of Member States (17) have some type of mechanism in place to enforce decisions, and in 16 Member States supreme administrative courts are entitled to apply penalties for the non-execution of their judgments. Direct enforcement measures, such as seizure of assets, are only available in two Member States.

2.3. Independence of justice systems

Judicial independence, which is integral to the task of judicial decision-making, is a requirement in EU law stemming from the principle of effective judicial protection referred to in Article 19 TEU and from the right to an effective remedy before a court or tribunal enshrined in Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU ([107]). Judicial independence presumes the following:

(a) **external independence**, where the relevant body exercises its functions autonomously, without being subject to any hierarchical constraint or subordinated to any other body and without taking orders or instructions from any source whatsoever, thus being protected against external interventions or pressure that could impair the independent judgement of its members and influence their decisions; and

(b) **internal independence and impartiality**, where an equal distance is maintained from the parties to the proceedings and their respective interests with regard to the subject matter of those proceedings ([108]), and when individual judges are protected from undue internal pressure within the judiciary ([109]).

Judicial independence is vital to guarantee that all the rights that individuals derive from EU law will be protected and that the values common to the Member States set out in Article 2 TEU, in

[107] See http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT&from=EN

[108] Court of Justice, judgment of 6 March 2025, *D. K. and Others v Prokuratura Rejonowa (Withdrawal of cases),* joined cases C-647/21 and C-648/21, EU:C:2025:143, judgment of 25 February 2025 (Grand Chamber), *XL and Others (Judicial salaries)*, joined cases C-146/23 and C-374/23, EU:C:2025:109, judgment of 14 November 2024, *S. S.A. v C. sp. z o.o. (Allocation of cases)*, C-197/23, EU:C:2024:956; judgment of 22 February 2022, *RS (Effect of the decisions of a constitutional court)*, C-430/21, EU:C:2022:99; judgment of 16 November 2021, *Criminal proceedings against WB and Others*, Joined Cases C-748/19 to C-754/19, EU:C:2021:931; judgment of 6 October 2021, *W. Ż.*, C-487/19, EU:C:2021:798; judgment of 15 July 2021, *Commission v. Poland*, C-791/19, EU:C:2021:366; judgment of 2 March 2021, *AB*, C-824/18, EU:C:2021:153; judgment of 19 November 2019, *A. K. and Others*, C-585/18, C-624/18 and C-625/18, EU:C:2019:982, paras. 121 and 122; judgment of 5 November 2019, *Commission v Poland*, C-192/18, EU:C:2019:924; judgment of 24 June 2019, *Commission v. Poland*, C-619/18, EU:C:2019:531 paras. 73 and 74; judgment of 27 February 2018, *Associação Sindical dos Juízes Portugueses*, C- 64/16, EU:C:2018:117, para. 44; judgment of 25 July 2018, *Minister for Justice and Equality*, C- 216/18 PPU,EU:C:2018:586, para. 65.

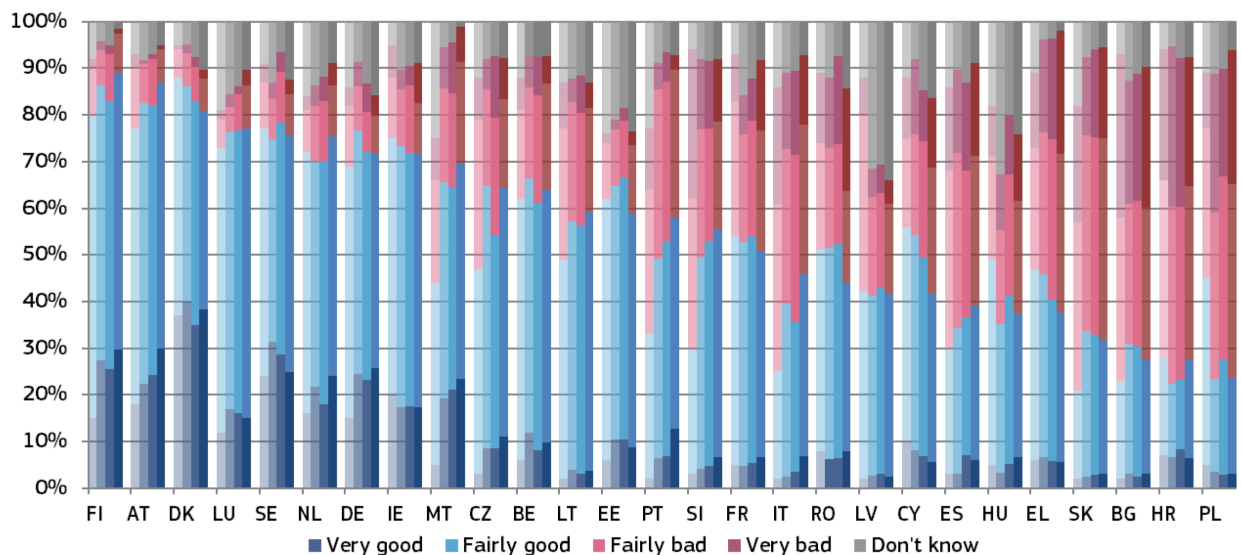
[109] Court of Justice, judgment of 11 July 2024 (Grand Chamber), *Hann-Invest*, C-554/21 and C-622/21, EU:C:2024:594. Supreme Courts, as final instance courts, and higher/appeal courts in general, are essential to secure the uniform application of the law in Member States. Nevertheless, hierarchical judicial organisations should not undermine individual independence (Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)12, para. 22). Superior courts should not address instructions to judges about the way they should decide individual cases, except in national preliminary rulings or when deciding on legal remedies according to the law (Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)12, para. 23). A hierarchical organisation of the judiciary in the sense of a subordination of judges to higher instances in their judicial decision-making activity would be a clear violation of the principle of internal independence, according to the Venice Commission (Venice Commission, Report on the independence of the judicial system, Part I: the independence of courts, Study No 494/2008, 16 March 2010, CDL-AD(2010)004, paras. 68 - 72). Any procedure for the unification of case law must comply with fundamental principles of separation of powers, and even after such a decision by a higher/Supreme Court, all courts and judges must remain competent to assess their cases independently and impartially, and to distinguish new cases from the interpretation previously unified by a higher/supreme court (2022 EU Justice Scoreboard, p. 45).

particular the value of the rule of law, will be safeguarded ([110]). Preserving the EU legal order is fundamental for all people and businesses whose rights and freedoms are protected under EU law.

A high level of perceived independence of the judiciary is vital for the trust which justice must inspire in individuals in a society governed by the rule of law. It also contributes to a growth-friendly business environment, as a perceived lack of independence can deter investment. The Scoreboard includes indicators for the judiciary's independence relating to the effectiveness of investment protection. In addition to indicators on perceived judicial independence from various sources, the Scoreboard presents indicators on how justice systems are organised to protect judicial independence in certain types of situations where independence could be at risk. This reflects input from the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ), the Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the EU (NPSJC), and the Network of Public Prosecutors or equivalent institutions at the Supreme Judicial Courts of the Member States of the European Union (NADAL Network).

2.3.1. Perceived judicial independence and effectiveness of investment protection

Figure 50: How the general public perceives the independence of courts and judges (*) *(source: Eurobarometer ([111]) – from left to right, light colours: 2016, 2023 and 2024, dark colours: 2025)*



(*) Member States are ordered first by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence of courts and judges is 'very good' or 'fairly good' (total good); if some Member States have the same percentage of 'total good', then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence of courts and judges is 'fairly bad' or 'very bad' (total bad); if some Member States have the same percentage of total good and total bad, then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence of courts and judges is very good; if

[110] Court of Justice, judgment of 5 June 2023, *Commission v. Poland*, C-204/21, ECLI:EU:C:2023:442, para. 354 and the case law cited.

[111] Eurobarometer survey FL555, conducted between 13 and 29 January 2025. Replies to the question: 'From what you know, how would you rate the justice system in (your country) in terms of the independence of courts and judges? Would you say it is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?', see: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/eu-justice-scoreboard_en#surveys.

some Member States have the same percentage of total good, total bad and 'very good' then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence of courts and judges is 'very bad'.

Figure 51 shows the main reasons given by respondents for a perceived lack of independence of courts and judges. Respondents among the general public who rated the independence of the justice system as being 'fairly bad' or 'very bad' could choose between three reasons to explain their rating. The Member States are listed in the same order as in Figure 50.

Figure 51: Main reasons among the general public for the perceived lack of independence *(share of all respondents - higher value means more influence) (source: Eurobarometer ([112]))*

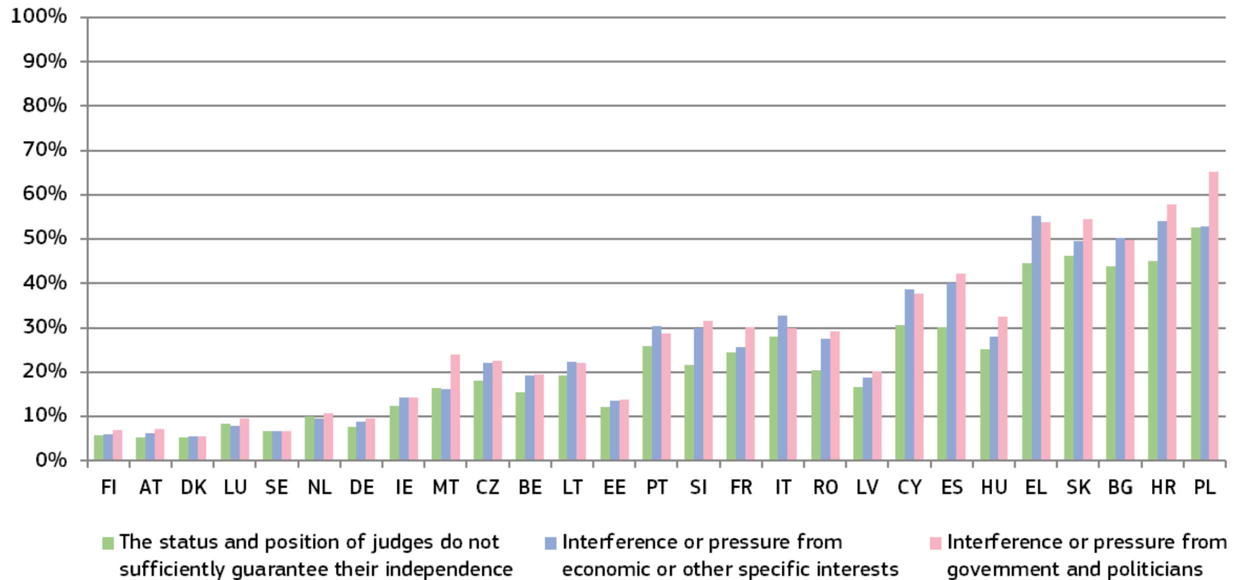
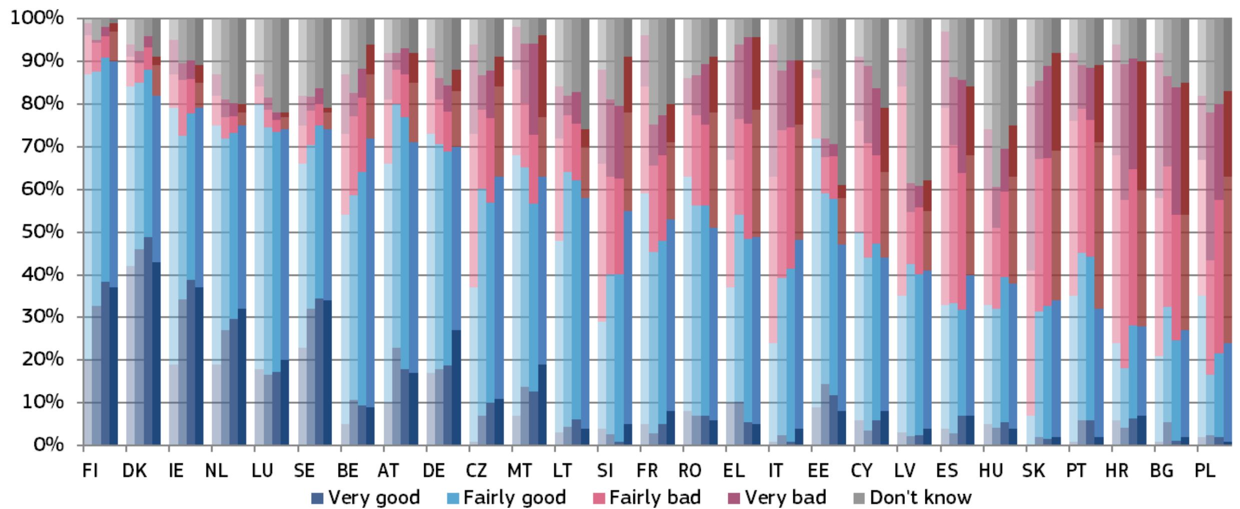


Figure 52: How companies perceive the independence of courts and judges (*) *(source: Eurobarometer ([113]) – from left to right, light colours: 2016, 2023 and 2024, dark colours: 2025)*



(*) Member States are ordered first by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence of courts and judges is 'very good' or 'fairly good' (total good); if some Member States have the same percentage of total good,

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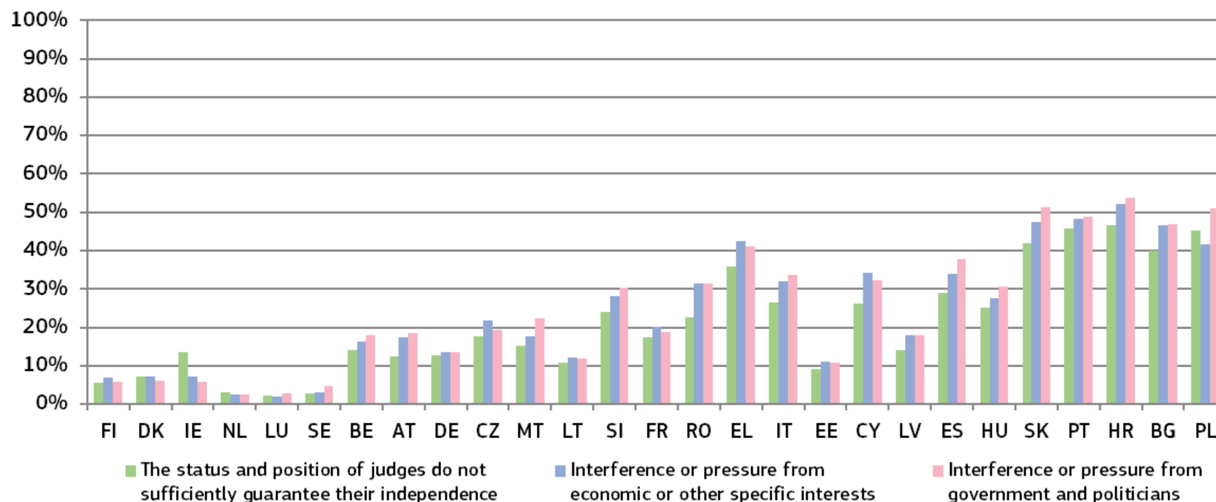
[112] Eurobarometer survey FL555, replies to the question: 'Could you tell me to what extent each of the following reasons explains your rating of the independence of the justice system in your country: very much, somewhat, not really, not at all?' if the reply to Q1 is 'fairly bad' or 'very bad'.

[113] Eurobarometer survey FL555, conducted between 13 and 29 January 2025, replies to the question: 'From what you know, how would you rate the justice system in (your country) in terms of the independence of courts and judges? Would you say it is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?', see: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/eu-justice-scoreboard_en#surveys.

then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence of courts and judges is 'fairly bad' or 'very bad' (total bad); if some Member States have the same percentage of total good and total bad, then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence of courts and judges is 'very good'; if some Member States have the same percentage of total good, total bad and 'very good', then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence of courts and judges is 'very bad'.

Figure 53 shows the main reasons given by companies for the perceived lack of independence of courts and judges. Respondents rated the independence of the justice system as being 'fairly bad' or 'very bad,' could choose between three reasons to explain their rating. The Member States are listed in the same order as in Figure 52.

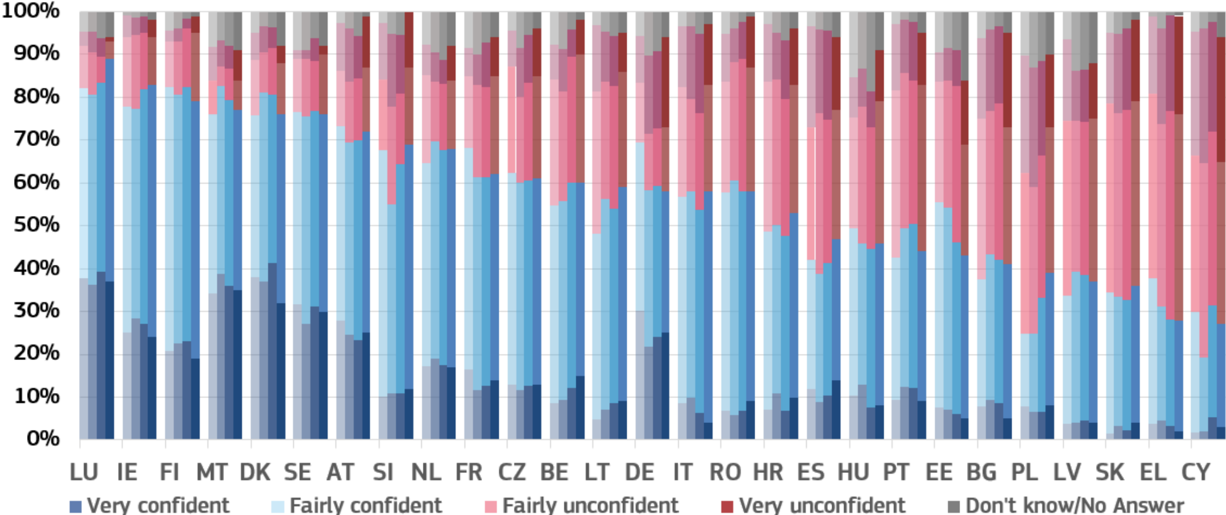
Figure 53: Main reasons among companies for the perceived lack of independence *(rate of all respondents - higher value means more influence) (source: Eurobarometer ([114]))*



[114] Eurobarometer survey FL555; replies to the question: 'Could you tell me to what extent each of the following reasons explains your rating of the independence of the justice system in (your country): very much, somewhat, not really, not at all?' if the response to Q1 was 'fairly bad' or 'very bad'.

Promoting, facilitating and protecting investments are key priorities within the EU single market. EU law aims to maintain a harmonious equilibrium between protecting investments and pursuing other public interest goals that enhance the welfare of its people. Figure 54 shows, for the fourth time, the indicator on how companies perceive the effectiveness of investment protection by the law and courts as regards, in their view, unjustified decisions or inaction by the State.

Figure 54: How companies perceive the effectiveness of investment protection by the law and courts (*) *(source: Eurobarometer ([115]) – from left to right, light colours: 2022, 2023 and 2024, dark colours: 2025)*

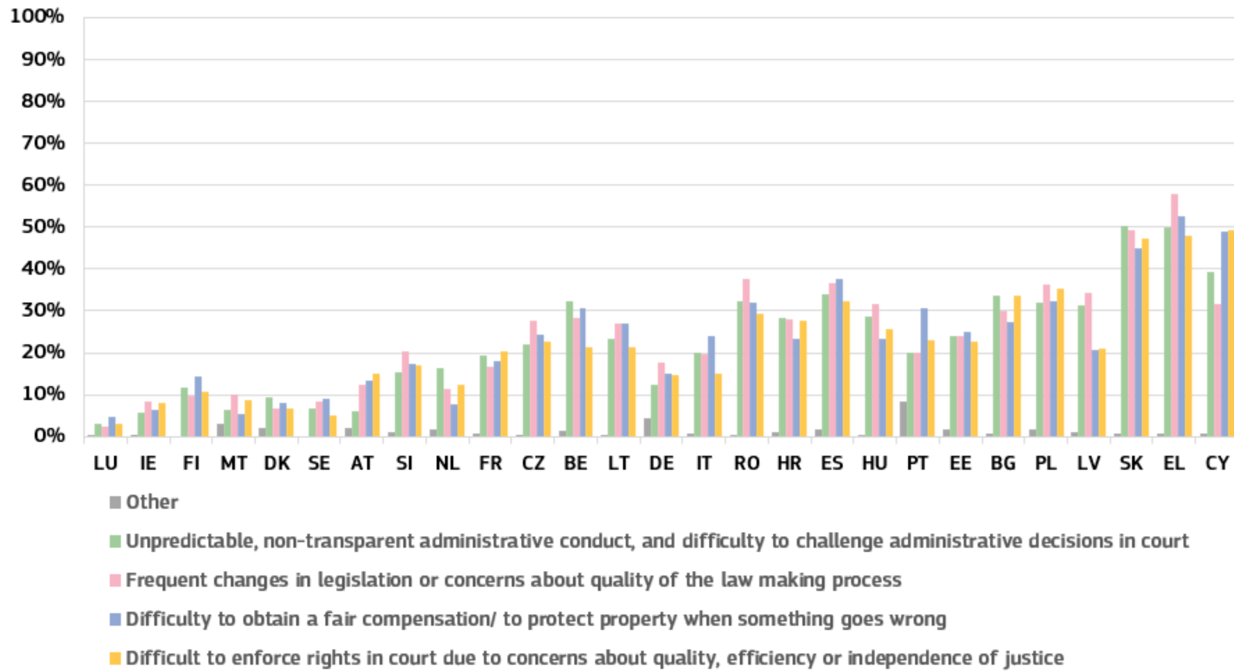


(*) Member States are ordered first by the combined percentage of respondents who stated that they are very or fairly confident in investment protection by the law and courts (total confident); if some Member States have the same percentage of total confident, then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that they are 'fairly unconfident' or 'very unconfident' in the effectiveness of investment protection (total unconfident); if some Member States have the same percentage of total confident and total unconfident, then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that they are 'very confident' in the effectiveness of investment protection; if some Member States have the same percentage of total confident, total unconfident and 'very confident', then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that they are 'very unconfident' in the effectiveness of investment protection.

Figure 55 shows the main reasons given by companies for the perceived lack of effectiveness of investment protection. Respondents which rated their level of confidence as 'fairly unconfident' or 'very unconfident', could choose between four reasons to explain their rating (and some indicated 'other'). The Member States are listed in the same order as in Figure 54.

[115] Eurobarometer survey FL555, conducted between 13 and 29 January 2025, replies to the question Q3: 'To what extent are you confident that your investments are protected by the law and courts in (your country) if something goes wrong?' For the purpose of the survey, investment was defined as including any kind of asset that a company owns or controls and that is characterised by the commitment of capital or other resources, the expectation of gain or profit or the assumption of risk.

Figure 55: Main reasons among companies for their perceived lack of effectiveness of investment protection *(rate of all respondents - higher value means more influence) (source: Eurobarometer ([116]))*



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[116] Eurobarometer survey FL555; replies to the question: 'What are your main reasons for concern about the effectiveness of investment protection?' if the response to Q3 was 'fairly unconfident' or 'very unconfident'.

2.3.2. Structural judicial independence

The guarantees of structural independence require rules, particularly on the composition of the court and the appointment, length of service and grounds for abstention, rejection and dismissal of its members, that are such as to dispel any reasonable doubt in the minds of individuals as to the imperviousness of the court to external factors and its neutrality with respect to the interests before it ([117]). They must, in particular, be such as to preclude not only any direct influence, in the form of instructions, but also types of influence that are more indirect and that are liable to have an effect on the decisions of the judges concerned ([118]).

European standards have been developed, particularly by the Council of Europe, for example in the *2010 Council of Europe Recommendation on judges: independence, efficiency and responsibilities* ([119]). The EU Justice Scoreboard presents certain indicators on issues that are relevant when assessing how justice systems are organised to safeguard judicial independence. Implementing policies and practices to promote integrity and prevent corruption within the judiciary is also essential to guarantee judicial independence. Ultimately, the effective protection of judicial independence also requires, beyond whatever necessary norms, a culture of integrity and impartiality shared by magistrates and respected by wider society.

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[117] See Court of Justice, judgment of 6 March 2025, *D. K. and Others v Prokuratura Rejonowa (Withdrawal of cases),* joined cases C-647/21 and C-648/21, judgment of 25 February 2025 (Grand Chamber), *XL and Others (Judicial salaries)*, joined cases C-146/23 and C-374/23, judgment of 14 November 2024, *S. S.A. v C. sp. z o.o. (Allocation of cases)*, C-197/23, judgment of 11 July 2024 (Grand Chamber), *Hann-Invest*, C-554/21, judgment of 21 December 2023, *Krajowa Rada Sądownictwa (Maintien en fonctions d'un juge)*, C-718/21, ECLI:EU:C:2023:1015, paras. 76-77, and the case-law cited, judgment of 5 June 2023, *Commission v. Poland*, C-204/21, ECLI:EU:C:2023:442, para. 355; judgment of 16 November 2021, *Criminal proceedings against WB and Others*, Joined Cases C-748/19 to C-754/19, para. 67; judgment of 6 October 2021, *W.Ż.*, C-487/19, para. 109; judgment of 15 July 2021, *Commission v. Poland*, C-791/19, para. 59; judgment of 2 March 2021, *A.B.*, C-824/18, para.117; judgment of 19 November 2019, *A. K. and Others* (Independence of the Disciplinary Chamber of the Supreme Court), C-585/18, C-624/18 and C-625/18, ECLI:EU:C:2019:982, paras. 121 and 122; judgment of 24 June 2019, *Commission v. Poland*, C-619/18, ECLI:EU:C:2019:531 paras. 73 and 74; judgment of 25 July 2018, *LM*, C-216/18 PPU, ECLI:EU:C:2018:586, para. 66; judgment of 27 February 2018, *Associação Sindical dos Juízes Portugueses*, C- 64/16, ECLI:EU:C:2018:117, para. 44. See also paragraphs 46 and 47 of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)12 Judges: Independence, Efficiency and Responsibility (adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 17 November 2010) and the explanatory memorandum. These provide that the authority taking decisions on the selection and career of judges should be independent of the executive and legislative powers. With a view to guaranteeing its independence, at least half of the members of the authority should be judges chosen by their peers. However, where the constitutional or other legal provisions prescribe that the head of state, the government or the legislative power take decisions concerning the selection and career of judges, an independent and competent authority drawn in substantial part from the judiciary (without prejudice to the rules applicable to councils for the judiciary contained in Chapter IV) should be authorised to make recommendations or express opinions which the relevant appointing authority follows in practice.

[118] See Court of Justice, judgment of 5 June 2023, *Commission v. Poland*, C-204/21, ECLI:EU:C:2023:442, para. 355; judgment of 2 March 2021, *A.B.*, C-824/18, para. 119; judgment of 19 November 2019, *A. K. and Others* (Independence of the Disciplinary Chamber of the Supreme Court), C-585/18, C-624/18 and C-625/18, ECLI:EU:C:2019:982, para. 123; judgment of 24 June 2019, *Commission v. Poland*, C-619/18, ECLI:EU:C:2019:531 para. 112.

[119] See Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)12 Judges: Independence, Efficiency and Responsibility, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 17 November 2010 and the explanatory memorandum ('the Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)12').

This edition of the Scoreboard contains new and updated indicators on: withdrawal and recusal of judges (Figure 56) ([120]), authorities involved in the appointment and dismissal of heads of prosecution offices (Figure 57) ([121]), and on the independence of bars and lawyers (Figure 58) ([122]). The figures present the national frameworks as they were in December 2024.

The figures presented in the Scoreboard do not provide an assessment or present quantitative data on the effectiveness of the safeguards. They are not intended to reflect the complexity and details of the procedures and accompanying safeguards.

– Withdrawal and recusal of judges –

Figure 56, first presented in the 2016 EU Justice Scoreboard (now updated) shows whether or not judges may be subject to sanctions for failure to comply with the obligation to withdraw from adjudicating a case in which their impartiality is in question, compromised, or where there is a reasonable perception of bias. The figure also shows which authority ([123]) is responsible for taking a decision on a request for recusal made by a party intending to challenge a judge ([124]).

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[120] The figure is based on the responses to an updated questionnaire drawn up by the Commission in close association with the ENCJ. Responses to the updated questionnaire from Member States that have no councils for the judiciary or that are not ENCJ members (CZ, DE, EE, AT and PL) were obtained in cooperation with the Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the EU.

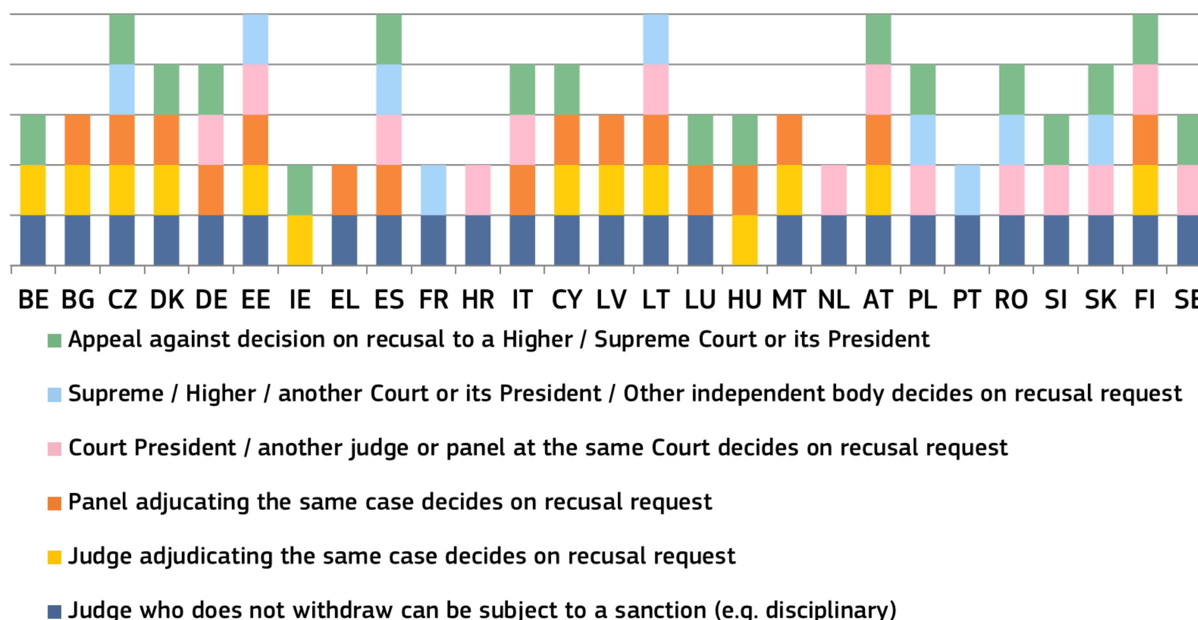
[121] Figures are based on responses to an updated questionnaire drawn up by the Commission in close cooperation with the Network of Public Prosecutors or equivalent institutions at the Supreme Judicial Courts of the Member States of the European Union – the NADAL Network.

[122] Figure is based on the responses to an updated questionnaire drawn up by the Commission in close association with the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE).

[123] Sometimes more than one authority can take this decision, depending on the level of the court where the recused judge sits.

[124] Paragraphs 59, 60 and 61 of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)12 provide that judges should act independently and impartially in all cases and should withdraw from a case or decline to act where there are valid reasons defined by law, and not otherwise.

Figure 56: Withdrawal and recusal of a judge (*) (*source: European Network of Councils for the Judiciary and Network of Presidents of Supreme Judicial Courts of the EU (*[125]*)*)



– Safeguards relating to the functioning of national prosecution services in the EU –

Public prosecution plays a major role in the criminal justice system and in cooperation between Member States in criminal matters. The proper functioning of the national prosecution service is crucial for the effective fight against crime, including economic and financial crime, such as money laundering and corruption. According to the case law of the Court of Justice relating to the European Arrest Warrant Framework Decision ([126]), the public prosecutor's office can be considered a Member State judicial authority for the purposes of issuing and executing a European arrest warrant whenever it can act independently, without being exposed to the risk of being subject, directly or indirectly, to directions or instructions in a specific case from the executive, such as a Minister for Justice ([127]).

[125] Data collected through an updated questionnaire drawn up by the Commission in close association with the ENCJ. Responses to the updated questionnaire from Member States that have no Councils for the Judiciary are not ENCJ members, were obtained through cooperation with the NPSC.

[126] Council Framework Decision 2002/584/JHA on the European arrest warrant and the surrender procedures between Member States (OJ L 190, 18.7.2002, p. 1).

[127] Court of Justice, judgment of 27 May 2019, *OG and PI (Public Prosecutor's Office of Lübeck and Zwickau)*, Joined Cases C-508/18 and C-82/19 PPU, paras 73, 74 and 88, ECLI:EU:C:2019:456; judgment of 27 May 2019, C- 509/18, para 52, ECLI:EU:C:2019:457; see also judgments of 12 December 2019, *Parquet général du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg and Openbaar Ministerie (Public Prosecutors of Lyon and Tours),* in Joined Cases C-566/19 PPU and C-626/19, ECLI:EU:C:2019:1077; *Openbaar Ministerie (Swedish Prosecution Authority),* C-625/19 PPU, ECLI:EU:C:2019:1078, and *Openbaar Ministerie (Public Prosecutor in Brussels),* C-627/19 PPU, ECLI:EU:C:2019:1079; judgment of 24 November 2020, *AZ*, C-510/19, para 54, ECLI:EU:C:2020:953. See also judgment of 10 November 2016, *Kovalkovas,* C-477/16 PPU, paras 34 and 36, ECLI:EU:C:2016:861, and judgment of 10 November 2016, *Poltorak,* C-452/16 PPU, para 35, ECLI:EU:C:2016:858, on the term 'judiciary', 'which must […] be distinguished, in accordance with the principle of the separation of powers which characterises the operation of the rule of law, from the executive'. See also Opinion No 13(2018) Independence, accountability

The organisation of national prosecution services varies across the EU and there is no uniform model for all Member States. However, the Council of Europe has noted a widespread tendency to have a more independent prosecutor's office, rather than one subordinate or linked to the executive ([128]). According to the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors, an effective and autonomous prosecution service committed to upholding the rule of law and human rights in the administration of justice is one of the pillars of a democratic state ([129]).

Procedures for appointing national prosecutors may influence the extent of the prosecution service's independence. Whatever the model of the national justice system or the legal tradition in which it is anchored, European standards provide that Member States take effective measures to guarantee that public prosecutors are able to fulfil their professional duties and responsibilities under appropriate legal and organisational conditions ([130]) and without unjustified interference ([131]).

Figure 57 presents the appointment and dismissal procedures for heads of prosecution offices. The figure shows the diversity of organisational models of the prosecution service across Member States around the executive power or the judiciary. The figure also shows the role of the prosecutor-general and councils for the judiciary/prosecutorial councils as important actors in the appointment and dismissal of heads of prosecution offices.

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and ethics of prosecutors, adopted by the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE), recommendation xii.

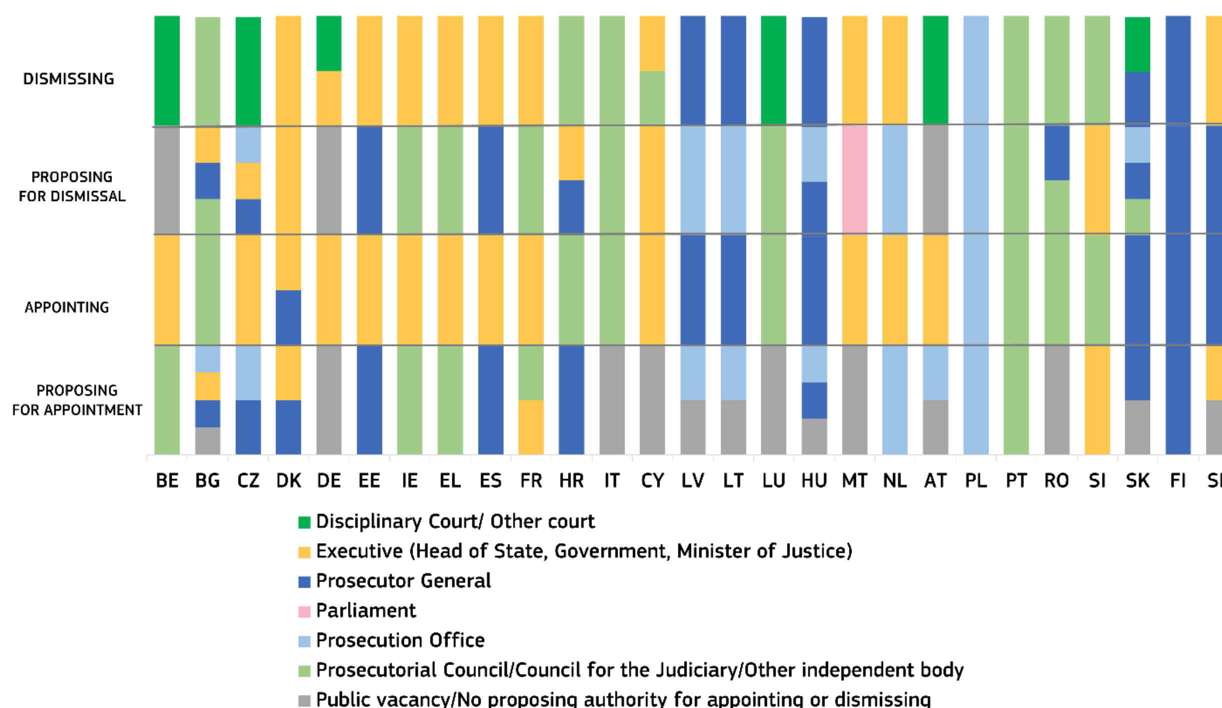
[128] CDL-AD(2010)040-e Report on European Standards as regards the Independence of the Judicial System: Part II - the Prosecution Service - Adopted by the Venice Commission - at its 85th plenary session (Venice, 17-18 December 2010), para. 26.

[129] In a democratic society, both courts and the investigative authorities must remain free from political pressure. The concept of independence means that prosecutors are free from unlawful interference in the exercise of their duties to ensure full respect for and application of the law and the principle of the rule of law and that they are not subject to any political pressure or unlawful influence of any kind. Independence applies not only to the prosecution service as a whole, but also to its particular bodies and to individual prosecutors. Whatever the model of the national justice system or the legal tradition in which it is anchored, European standards provide that Member States take effective measures to guarantee that public prosecutors are able to fulfil their professional duties and responsibilities under appropriate legal and organisational conditions and without unjustified interference. See Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE) Opinion No 15 (2020) on the role of prosecutors in emergency situations, in particular when facing a pandemic; Opinion No 16 (2021) on the implications of the decisions of international courts and treaty bodies as regards the practical independence of prosecutors, para. 13. See also Recommendation Rec(2000)19 on the role of public prosecution in the criminal justice system, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 6 October 2000 (the 2000 Recommendation), paras. 4, 11 and 13. Opinion No 13(2018) Independence, accountability and ethics of prosecutors, adopted by the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE), recommendations i and iii; Group of States against corruption (GRECO), fourth evaluation round 'Corruption prevention - Members of Parliament, Judges and Prosecutors', a large number of recommendations ask for the introduction of arrangements to shield the prosecution service from undue influence and interference in the investigation of criminal cases.

[130] Recommendation Rec(2000)19 on the role of public prosecution in the criminal justice system, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 6 October 2000 (the 2000 Recommendation), para. 4.

[131] The 2000 Recommendation, paras 11 and 13. See also Opinion No 13(2018) Independence, accountability and ethics of prosecutors, adopted by the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors (CCPE), recommendations i and iii.

Figure 57: Heads of prosecution offices: appointment and dismissal (*) *(Source: European Commission with the NADAL ([132]))*



BE: *The Council for the Judiciary proposes the candidates to the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Justice proposes them to the King. A disciplinary court dismisses them.* ***BG:*** *The charts shows the situation of administrative heads, not of deputy administrative heads. The Prosecutor General for the heads of the appellate prosecution offices, the heads of the superior prosecution offices for head of a prosecution office in the respective judicial district and the Minister of Justice for all candidates can propose, while candidates can also self-nominate. The Prosecutorial Council appoints. The Prosecutorial Council, the Prosecutor General and the Minister of Justice may propose dismissal, the Supreme Judicial Council dismisses. The Director of the National Investigation Service is dismissed by the Prosecutors Chamber of the Supreme Judicial Council on a proposal by at least three members of the Prosecutors Chamber, or the Prosecutor General, or the Minister of Justice.* ***CZ:*** *The heads of district, regional and high prosecution offices are appointed by the Minister of Justice upon a proposal by the head of the next closest superior prosecution office or upon a proposal by the Prosecutor General or the Ministry of Justice. The Prosecutor General and the heads of superior prosecution offices can propose the dismissal of the head of high, regional or district prosecution office. A disciplinary court dismisses.* ***DK:*** *The responsibility for appointing heads of offices in the Local Prosecution Service is delegated from the Ministry of Justice to the Director of Public Prosecutions (Prosecutor General).* ***DE:*** *After a public call, the Federal Ministry of Justice appoints the public prosecutors at the federal state level. There is no proposal for a dismissal. The Federal Ministry of Justice can temporarily dismiss the public prosecutors or transfer them to another post for service-related reasons, the specific judicial branch of service courts (civil servant courts) can dismiss from civil service.* ***EE :*** *The Prosecutor General proposes the appointment/dismissal and the Minister of Justice appoints/dismisses.* ***IE****: The Director of Public Prosecutions is the sole prosecution office responsible for prosecutions in IE. The proposals for the appointment and dismissal are done by the Top-Level Appointments Committee (TLAC), and the Government has the final decision on both appointment and dismissal.* ***EL:*** *The decision of the Highest Judicial Council is executed after a decree by the President of the Republic is issued. As an exception, the heads of the prosecution offices at the Courts of First Instance of Athens and Thessaloniki and the head of the prosecution office at the Court of Appeal of Athens are elected by the prosecutors serving at the respective offices in secret ballot. The Head of the Economic Crime Prosecution Office is appointed by the Highest Judicial Council. The Highest Judicial Council proposes a dismissal, the President dismisses.* ***ES:*** *The Prosecutor General*

[132] Data collected through a questionnaire drawn up by the Commission in close association with the NADAL Network of Prosecutors.

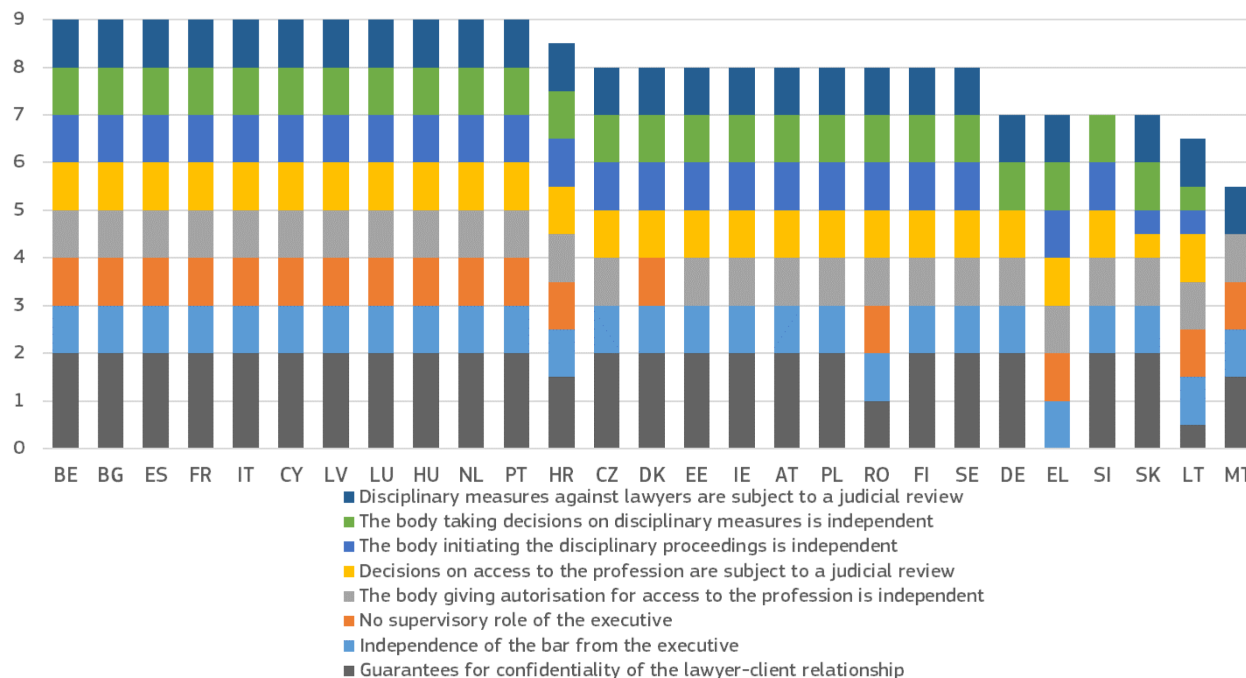
nominates the candidates for a particular post within the Prosecution Office, the Deputy Chief Regional Prosecutors and Deputy Chief Prosecutors of the Special Public Prosecutor's Office, which are then appointed by the Government (the King formally appoints). Beforehand, the Prosecutor General consults the Public Prosecution Council (a collegiate and representative body of the PPO) as well as the Chief Regional Prosecutors when positions of their respective regions are involved. The Prosecutor General proposes dismissal, after consulting the Prosecution Council and, when appropriate, the Chief Regional Prosecutor, and the Government decides on dismissal. ***FR:*** *The Minister of Justice makes a proposal, the Council for the judiciary gives its opinion, and the President of the Republic appoints by decree. The opinion of the Council for the judiciary is consultative, but according to a well-established custom, the Ministry and the President respect unfavourable opinions. The Conseil supérieur de la magistrature proposes the dismissal and the Minister of Justice dismisses.* ***CY****: The Attorney General is the sole head of prosecution office. The appointment is done by the President. The dismissal is done by the Supreme Constitutional Court acting as a Judicial Council.* ***LV:*** *After a public call, the Prosecutor's Attestation Commission (established by the Council of the Prosecutor General and composed of prosecutors of different level) proposes the candidate for appointment, and proposes dismissal.* ***LT:*** *The Selection Commission for Prosecutors (composed of 4 prosecutors and 3 non-prosecutors) proposes the candidates after an open call. The Attestation Commission (composed of 4 prosecutors and 3 non-prosecutors) or the prosecutor who carried out internal investigation towards actions of the prosecutor can propose a dismissal.* ***LU:*** *The Council for the Judiciary appoints. The Council of the Judiciary files a disciplinary procedure, upon which a disciplinary tribunal decides on dismissal.* ***HU:*** *After a public job advertisement, the Prosecutor General decides upon the applications and appoints prosecutors to the senior positions. The Prosecutor's Council gives its opinion. The Prosecutor General revocates managerial and senior appointments at any time without justification. Heads of prosecution offices may propose the revocation, but this is non-binding for the Prosecutor General.* ***MT:*** *The chart reflects the situation regarding the Attorney General (Prosecutor General). After a public call, the President appoints in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister. The dismissal of the Attorney General is proposed by Parliament supported by the votes of not less than two thirds of all the members, the President dismisses.* ***NL:*** *The Board of Prosecutors General as head of the Public Prosecution Service submits nominations to the Minister of Justice and Security, who decides whether nominations qualify for appointment by royal decree. The Board of Prosecutors General dismisses with consent of the Minister of Justice and Security.* ***AT:*** *A Personnel Commission at the Federal Ministry of Justice, composed of prosecutors, proposes a candidate for the Heads of the Offices of Senior Public Prosecutors and the Head of the Prosecutor General's Office. The Personnel Commission at an Office of Senior Public Prosecutors proposes candidates for heads of all Public Prosecutor's Offices in their region/area of competence to the Federal Ministry of Justice. The Federal President appoints the candidates. A disciplinary court dismisses them. The Supreme Court acts as the disciplinary court for members of the Prosecutor General's Office and the Head of the Office of Senior Public Prosecutors (and their first deputies); for other prosecutors, the Higher Regional Court (of another region) acts as disciplinary court (1st instance).* ***PL:*** *The National Prosecutor proposes the appointment after presenting the candidate to the assembly of prosecutors that the candidate is supposed to preside over. The National Prosecutor is the appointing authority. The same procedure applies to the dismissal.* ***RO:*** *The chart reflects the situation of heads of prosecution offices except the heads of specialised prosecution offices. After a public call, heads of prosecution offices are appointed by the Supreme Council of Magistracy. The dismissal of heads of prosecution offices is proposed by the Prosecutor General or the Judiciary Inspection, the Supreme Council of Magistracy dismisses.* ***SI:*** *The heads of district state prosecutor's offices are appointed by the Prosecutorial Council on the reasoned proposal of the Minister of Justice after obtaining the prior opinion of the State Prosecutor General. The Prosecutorial Council dismisses the head of a district state prosecutor's office on the proposal of the Minister after obtaining the prior opinion of the State Prosecutor General.* ***SK:*** *Following an open call, a 5-member selection committee (composed of prosecutors chosen by the Prosecutor General) proposes the chief prosecutors after a prior statement by the Prosecutorial Council. The Prosecutor General appoints. Theexceptions to this procedure are the Deputies of the Prosecutor General, which he himself/her herself appoints, and Deputy Regional/Deputy District Prosecutors, appointed by the Prosecutor General based on a proposal from the relevant Regional/District Prosecutor. Deputies are also considered as chief prosecutors. The Prosecutor General dismisses chief prosecutors. Prosecutor General has to dismiss if disciplinary court issued a decision on the dismissal. A disciplinary motion may be filed against the Prosecutor General by three fifths of the members of Parliament, or the President of the Republic. In the cases of chief prosecutors, it is the Prosecutor General, the Public Defender of Rights, and the Deputy Prosecutor General (against the prosecutors of the General Prosecutor's Office and leading prosecutors who fall within his or her management competence).* ***FI:*** *A senior prosecutor in the Prosecutor General's Office proposes the appointment or dismissal, which is then executed by the Prosecutor General. Additionally, a court may dismiss the Head of the Prosecution Office in case of imprisonment, with some exceptions.* ***SE:*** *The Employment Advisory Board for prosecutors proposes the Deputy Chief Public Prosecutor (non-binding proposal), the Chief*

Public Prosecutor as well as Senior Public Prosecutors, the Prosecutor General appoints them. The Prosecutor General proposes the dismissal, the Government Disciplinary Board for Higher Officials decides regarding the dismissal.

– Independence of bars and lawyers in the EU –

Lawyers and their professional associations play a fundamental role in ensuring the protection of fundamental rights and the rule of law ([133]). A fair system of administering justice requires that lawyers be free to pursue their activities of advising and representing their clients. Lawyers' membership of a liberal profession and the authority deriving from that membership help maintain their independence, and bar associations play an important role in helping to ensure lawyers' independence. European standards set out the freedom of exercise of the profession of a lawyer and the independence of bar associations. These standards also set out the basic principles for disciplinary proceedings against lawyers ([134]).

Figure 58: Independence of bars and lawyers, 2024 (*) *(source: European Commission with the CCBE ([135]))*



(*) Based on the survey results, Member States could score a maximum of 9 points. The survey was conducted at end of 2024. For the question on guarantees of the confidentiality of the lawyer/client relationship, 0.5 points were awarded for each scenario fully covered (search and seizure of e-data held by the lawyer, search of the lawyer's premises, interception of lawyer/client communication, surveillance of the lawyer or their premises, tax audit of the law firm and other administrative checks). For all other criteria fully met, 1 point was awarded. No points were awarded if the criterion was not met. ***MT****: 2020 replies, adapted to the new methodology.* ***EE****: The Ministry of Justice*

[133] 'Lawyers play an important role in protecting the rule of law and judicial independence, while respecting the separation of powers and fundamental rights.', '*Access to a lawyer and rule of law*', Presidency discussion paper for the meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 3 and 4 March 2022: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6319-2022-INIT/en/pdf.

[134] Recommendation No. R(2000)21 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

[135] The 2024 data are collected through replies by CCBE members to a questionnaire.

has broad supervisory powers over the organisation of the legal aid system. ***LT****: According to the Law on the Bar, disciplinary action against lawyers can be taken by the bar council. However, it also lays down that the Minister of Justice has such a right. If the Minister of Justice decides to initiate disciplinary action against a lawyer, the bar has no say in such proceedings, and the case goes directly to the disciplinary court. The disciplinary court consists of five lawyers, who are members of the bar. Three of the five are elected by the general assembly of the bar, and another two are appointed by the Minister of Justice.* ***PL****: The Ministry of Justice has a supervisory role over the bar, organising bar examinations and setting the amount of minimal legal fees (following non-mandatory opinion of the supreme bar council).* ***SI****: Disciplinary proceedings are conducted exclusively within the bar association itself. An appeal is possible against the decision of the disciplinary committee of the first instance, which is considered by the disciplinary committee of the second instance. There is no possibility of appeal against the decisions of the disciplinary committee of the second instance. This is determined in Article 65 of the Attorneys Act: 'The decisions of the disciplinary bodies of the bar association shall be enforceable.';* ***SK****: Primarily, it is the independent supervision committee of the Slovak Bar Association that files a petition based on the complaint. However, the Minister of Justice may also initiate a disciplinary proceeding if 'a lawyer performed an act which might be viewed as a professional misconduct under the legal rules which were in force so far, the chair of the supervision committee or the Minister of Justice (acting in their capacity of a petitioner) may submit an application for the commencement of the disciplinary proceeding under this Act to the appropriate bar's governing body within the time limit which applied to commencement of the disciplinary proceeding under the legal rule which was in force so far.'* ***FI:*** *The bar association is under the supervision of the Chancellor of Justice as public authority. The Chancellor has supervisory authority over attorneys as regulated in the Advocates Act.*

2.3.3. Summary on judicial independence

Judicial independence is an essential element of the right to an effective remedy before a court or tribunal, as enshrined in Article 47 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, and indispensable for ensuring effective judicial protection, as required under Article 19 of the Treaty on European Union. It is a fundamental element of an effective justice system and essential for upholding the rule of law. It is vital for ensuring the fairness of judicial proceedings and the trust of the public and businesses in the legal system. The national judicial systems must therefore fully respect the requirements as regards judicial independence following from EU law as interpreted by the Court of Justice of the EU and take due account of European standards on judicial independence. The 2025 Scoreboard shows trends in the general public's and companies' perceptions of judicial independence. This edition also presents some new indicators on the situation regarding the withdrawal and recusal of a judge in all Member States, and the appointment and dismissal of heads of prosecution offices.

The structural indicators do not in themselves allow for conclusions to be drawn about the independence of these bodies, but represent possible elements which may be taken as a starting point for such an analysis.

a) The 2025 Scoreboard presents the developments in perceived independence from surveys of the general public (Eurobarometer FL554) and companies (Eurobarometer FL555):

- On the one hand, the Eurobarometer survey among the general public (Figure 50) shows that the perception of independence of courts and judges has improved or remained stable in 17 Member States when compared to 2016, while five Member States face challenges. On the other hand, compared to last year, the general public's perception of independence improved or remained stable in 21 Member States while it decreased in 6 Members States. In three Member States, the level of perceived independence remains particularly low.

- The Eurobarometer survey of companies (Figure 52) shows that the perception of independence of courts and judges has improved or remained stable in 18 Member States when compared to 2016, while it decreased in nine Member States. Compared to last year, the companies' perception of independence improved or remained stable in 18 Member States and decreased in 9 Members States. In three Member States, the level of perceived independence remains particularly low.
- Among the reasons for the perceived lack of independence of courts and judges, interference or pressure from government and politicians was the most often stated reason, followed by pressure from economic or other specific interests. Both reasons remain notable for the three Member States where perceived independence is very low (Figures 51 and 53).

b) Since 2022, the EU Justice Scoreboard has presented the results of a Eurobarometer survey on how companies perceive the effectiveness of investment protection by the law and courts as regards, in their view, unjustified decisions or inaction by the State (Figure 54). Administrative conduct, stability and quality of the law-making process, as well as effectiveness of courts and property protection still remain key factors of comparable significance for confidence in investment protection (Figure 55). Compared to last year, confidence in investment protection improved in 13 Member States.

c) Figure 56 presents the situation regarding the withdrawal and recusal of a judge in all Member States.

d) Figure 57 looks at appointment and dismissal of heads of prosecution offices and thus at some of the safeguards relating to the functioning of national prosecution services in the EU.

e) Figure 58 shows that the independence of lawyers is generally ensured, allowing lawyers to freely pursue their activities of advising and representing their clients.

3. OTHER INDICATORS RELEVANT FOR THE SINGLE MARKET

Beyond the courts, prosecution services and other judicial bodies, which are important for the independent application of EU law, several other public authorities are tasked with applying EU law in specific areas, such as anti-corruption, public procurement and competition. This edition of the Scoreboard includes additional charts that are related to bodies that are pivotal for the good functioning of the single market.

In addition to the regularly covered topics, the 2025 Scoreboard shows for the first time indicators for the powers and independence of Supreme Audit Institutions, which play an important role in the area of anti-corruption, and presents data on the perceived independence, as well as on the authorities involved in the appointment and dismissal of national competition authorities and first instance public procurement review bodies, which are some of the key authorities for the functioning of the single market.

3.1. Independent authorities relevant for the functioning of the single market

Independent authorities are a key rule of law safeguard for the functioning of the single market. For the first time, the Scoreboard presents certain structural aspects of some of these authorities, such as the first instance review bodies on public procurement, national competition authorities and the supreme audit institutions. It also presents for the first time the perceived independence of the first instance review bodies on public procurement, and of the national competition authorities.

Figure 59 presents how companies perceive the independence of the first-instance public procurement review bodies. These bodies are set up in Member States on the basis of the Remedies Directives (Directive 89/665/EEC and Directive 92/13/EEC, as amended by Directive 2007/66/EC and Directive 2014/23/EU). According to the Remedies Directives, contracts falling within the scope of Directive 2014/23/EU, Directive 2014/24/EU and Directive 2014/25 and decisions taken by the contracting authorities and contracting entities may be reviewed effectively and, in particular, as rapidly as possible on the grounds that such decisions have infringed Union law in the field of public procurement or national rules transposing that law. The body responsible for the review may be judicial or non-judicial. Non-judicial bodies usually take the form of an independent

administrative authority. In that case, Remedies Directives stipulate further procedural requirements as well as the availability of further judicial review.

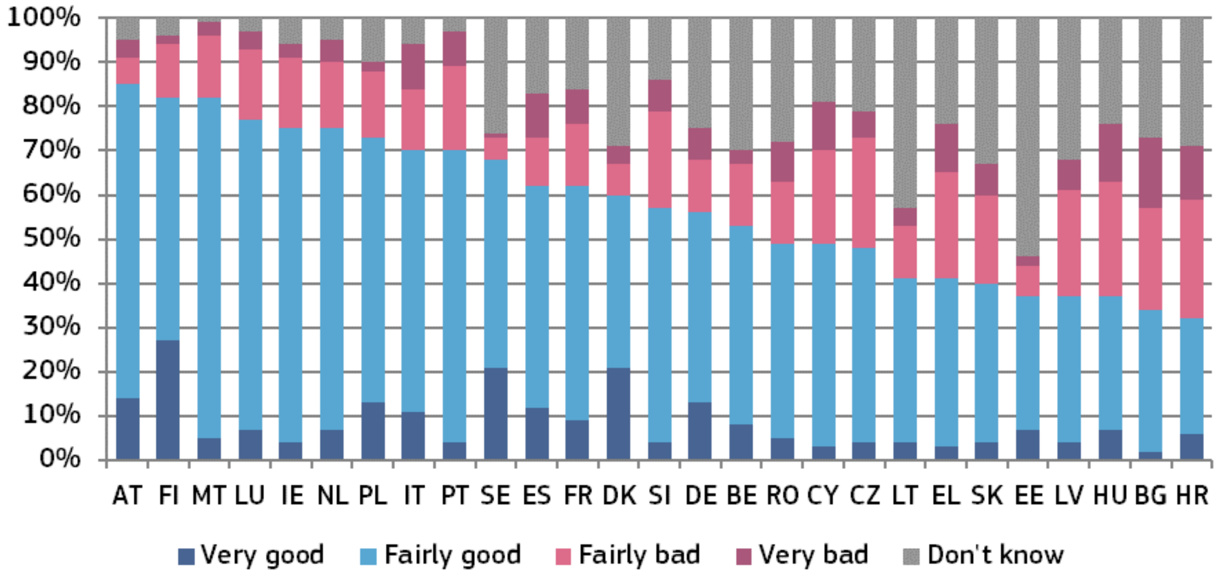
Figure 59 : How <u>companies</u> perceive the independence of the <u>first instance public procurement review bodies</u> (*) *(source: Eurobarometer ([136]) - 2025)*

(*) Member States are ordered first by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence is 'very good' or 'fairly good' (total good); if some Member States have the same percentage of total good, then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence is 'fairly bad' or 'very bad' (total bad); if some Member States have the same percentage of total good and total bad, then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence is 'very good'; if some Member States have the same percentage of total good, total bad and 'very good', then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence is 'very bad'.

Figure 60 presents how companies perceive the independence of the national competition authorities. These authorities form a part of a decentralised system that is based on the parallel competence of the Commission and the national competition authorities and national courts of the Member States to enforce EU antitrust rules. As such, they are one of the key authorities for the functioning of the single market.

[136] Eurobarometer survey FL555, conducted between 13 and 29 January 2025, replies to the question: 'From what you know, how would you rate the public procurement review body that reviews public procurement cases in terms of its independence? Would you say it is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?', see: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/eu-justice-scoreboard_en#surveys.

Figure 60: How companies perceive the independence of the national competition authorities (*) *(source: Eurobarometer ([137]) - 2025)*

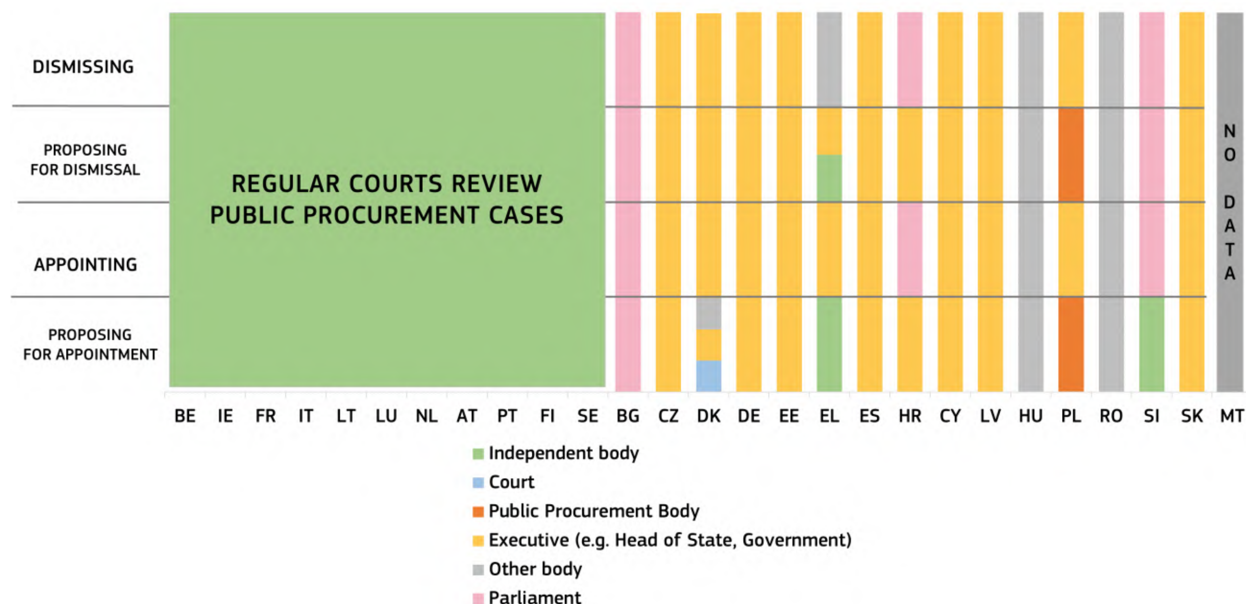


(*) Member States are ordered first by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence is 'very good' or 'fairly good' (total good); if some Member States have the same percentage of total good, then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence is 'fairly bad' or 'very bad' (total bad); if some Member States have the same percentage of total good and total bad, then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence is 'very good'; if some Member States have the same percentage of total good, total bad and 'very good', then they are ordered by the percentage of respondents who stated that the independence is 'very bad'.

Figure 61 presents the authorities involved in the appointment and dismissal procedures for first instance review bodies on public procurement. The figure reflects the procedures either regarding the members of the first instance public procurement review bodies (when these are of a non-judicial character or are not part of the regular court system and decide in panels) or their heads when the bodies consist of public officials.

[137] Eurobarometer survey FL555, conducted between 13 and 29 January 2025, replies to the question: 'From what you know, how would you rate the national competition authority that decides in competition matters in terms of its independence? Would you say it is very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad?', see: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/eu-justice-scoreboard_en#surveys.

Figure 61: First instance public procurement review bodies: appointment and dismissal (*) *(source: European Commission with the Network of First Instance Review Bodies on Public Procurement)*

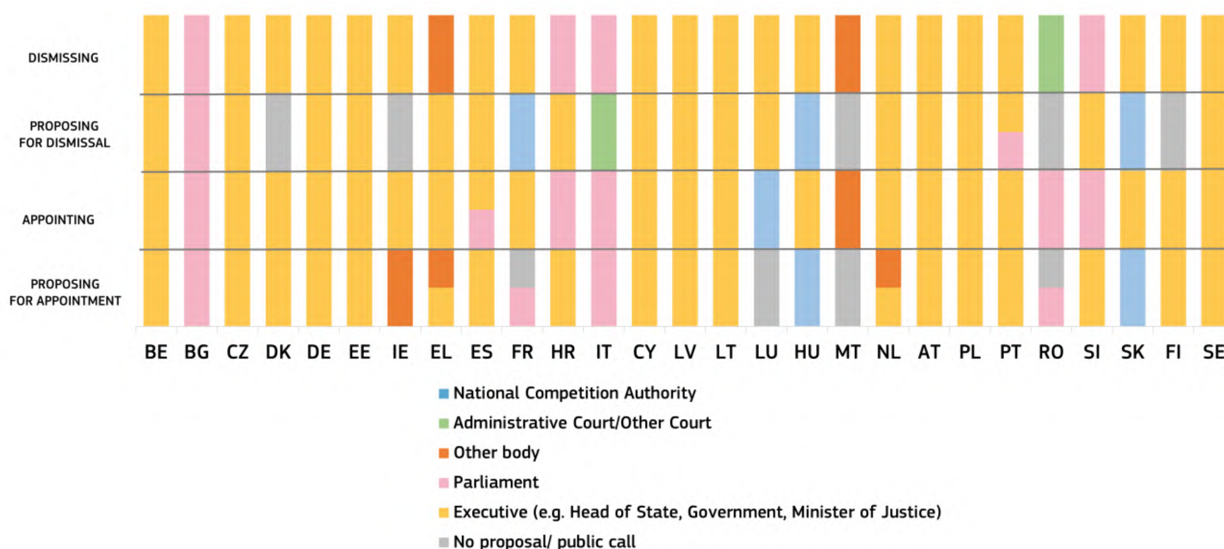


(*) The chart refers to the appointment and dismissal procedures of the following bodies: ***BG:*** *After a public procedure, each political party represented in Parliament proposes its own candidates for members and the chairperson of the Commission for Protection of Competition, and then Parliament starts to elect them with a certain quorum. According to the Law on protection of competition, the powers of the chairperson, deputy chairperson and members shall be terminated by Parliament priort to expirt of their term of office for specific reasons stated in the law.* ***CZ****: The chart reflects the situation for the Vice-Chairperson for Public Procurement. The public procurement review body consists of two instances. The first-instance decisions are signed by the Vice-Chairperson for Public Procurement and can be reviewed by the second instance represented by the Chairperson of the Office for the Protection of Competition (OPC). The Vice-Chairperson for Public Procurement is appointed and dismissed by the Chairperson of the OPC. The Chairperson is appointed and dismissed by the President of the Republic on proposal of the Government.* ***DK****: The chart reflects the situation of the members of the presidency (10 judges) including the head of the review body, and the 20 experts. All members are appointed by the Minister of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs. Members of the presidency are proposed by the president of the court under which the judges reside. The proposal from the president of the court is always followed. Experts are proposed partially by ministries and other government bodies, partially by certain associations and organisations mentioned in the law. The members and the head of the Complaints Board can be dismissed by the Danish Minister of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs. The minister does not need a proposal in order to dismiss a member or the head of the Complaints Board.* ***DE****: The chart reflects the situation of the appointing and the dismissal of the members of Public Procurement Tribunals (a specialized department of the Federal Cartel Office (*Bundeskartelamt*) at the federal level and* Vergabekammern *– Public Procurement Tribunals at the State level). The authority responsible for the appointment of the head of the first instance review body is the administrative authority the body belongs to (deviating rules on the states level possible). The members of the Tribunal are appointed for a term of office of five years by law. They take their decisions independently and are bound only by the law. See Section 157 (4) GWB (German Competition Act). There is no specific regulation about a dismissal in German procurement law. Only general civil service regulations ("Beamtenrecht") are likely to give rise to the possibility of dismissal from civil service by the head of the administrative body the Public Procurement Tribunal belongs to in exceptional cases, for example in the event of serious misconduct or long-term illness. However, the head of the administrative body may displace members into another position as an organisational decision.* ***EE****: The chart reflects the situation of the head and of the members of the Public Procurement Review Committee. Ministry of Finance proposes and the government appoints/dismisses.* ***EL****: The chart reflects the situation of the members of the panel of the Hellenic Single Public Procurement Authority. The selection of candidates for the positions of Members is carried out after an open procedure by the Supreme*

Personnel Selection Council (ASEP, independent administrative authority), in accordance with the procedure of L. 4765/2021 (A` 6). The members are appointed by a Decision of the Minister of Justice. The disciplinary procedure for the members of the Authority is initiated by the Minister of Justice, following a recommendation by the President of the Authority. A Disciplinary Council is established, which consists of a Vice President of the Council of State, a Vice President of the Supreme Court (Areios Pagos) and a Vice President of the Court of Audit. The head of the first instance review body (President) is proposed by the Minister of Justice and is appointed by an act of the Council of Ministers issued following the opinion of the Parliament's Special Permanent Committee on Institutions and Transparency. For dismissal, the disciplinary procedure for the members of the Authority is initiated by the Minister of Justice, following a recommendation by the President of the Authority. A Disciplinary Council is established, which consists of a Vice President of the Council of State, a Vice President of the Supreme Court and a Vice President of the Court of Audit. ***ES:*** *There is a joint proposal from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice to the Government (Council of ministers), which appoints. There is no dismissal, as the head of TACRC is appointed for a term of six years. Nevertheless, law establishes a list of reasons that put an end to this term of office.* ***CY****: The chart reflects the situation for the head and members of the Tenders Review Authority. For appointment, the proposing authority is the Ministry of Finance and the appointing authority is the Council of Ministers. For dismissal, the Council of Ministers is the proposing and dismissing authority.* ***LV****: Procurement Monitoring Bureau (PMB) is a state institution of direct administration under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance. The decisions within the review procedures are made by the complaint examination commission consisting of three members and specially established within the PMB for each case. Commissions are established by order of the head of the PMB. Members of the commission are civil servants/public officials (including the head of PMB). A commission for the assessment of candidates established by the head of the PMB proposes a candidate to the position. The members are appointed to the position by the head of the PMB. The members are dismissed by a decision of the head of the PMB.* ***HU****: The chart reflects the situation of the chairperson and the vice-chairperson of the Public Procurement Arbitration Board. The Council operating within the Public Procurement Authority appoints and/or discharges the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Public Procurement Arbitration Board. The Public Procurement Authority is a central budgetary organ operating as an autonomous state administration organ subordinated to Parliament. The members of the Council are set out in Section 183 (b) of the Act CXLIII of 2015 on public procurement.* ***PL****: The head of the first instance review body, National Appeal Chamber (NAC), the President of the NAC is appointed and dismissed, at the request of the President of the Public Procurement Office, by the Minister responsible for the economy for a term of three years.* ***RO****: The head of the first instance review body, National Council for Solving Complaints, is elected/dismissed by the Plenum within Council's members.* ***SI****: The chart reflects the situation for both the members of the panel and the head of the National Review Commission for Reviewing Public Procurement Award Procedures (NRC). For appointment, Judicial Council Commission for the Assessment of the Suitability of Candidates interviews the candidates and issues a reasoned opinion on the fulfilment of the special conditions referred to in Article 61.b of ZPVPJN and the suitability of the candidates. The Commission of Parliament responsible for mandates and elections by a process of voting chooses among the candidates who meet all the conditions and the President of the NRC is then appointed by Parliament. For dismissal, the Commission of Parliament responsible for mandates and elections sends a proposal for dismissal to the Commission and then the President is dismissed by Parliament.* ***SK****: The chart reflects the situation of the Vice-Chairperson of the first instance public procurement review body, Public Procurement Office (PPO). Review of public procurement is carried out by the Review Section of the PPO, which is headed by the Vice-Chairman, who is proposed by the head of the governmental office and appointed by the government. The second vice-charperson of PPO, the Vice-Chairperson for the strategic agenda is dismissed by the government on the proposal of the head of the governmental office.* ***HR****: The chart reflects the situation for both the members of the panel and the head of the first instance public procurement review body, State Commission for Supervision of Public Procurement Procedures. The Government proposes, Parliament appoints and dismisses.*

Figure 62 presents the authorities involved in the appointment and dismissal procedures for members of the national competion authorities.

Figure 62: National competition authorities: appointment and dismissal (*) *(source: European Commission with the Network of National Competition Authorities)*



*(*) **BE**: The Minister for the Economy proposes and appoints. The minister appoints a selection committee for the members. The Minister for the Economy proposes the dismissal, the Head of State (King) dismisses. **CZ**: The Chart reflects the situation of the Chairperson of the Office. The Government proposes the Chairperson of the Office, the President of the Republic appoints. The Government proposes the dismissal, the President of the Republic dismisses. The Chairperson of the Office is represented by 3 Vice-Chairpersons, which are appointed and dismissed by the Chairperson of the Office on her/his own proposal. **DK**: The Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs proposes, the Government appoints. There is no authority, which proposes a dismissal. The Government dismisses. **DE**: The decision-making bodies of the Bundeskartellamt are the decision divisions. The decisions of the decision divisions are taken by the division members (the Chairperson and two associate members). They are civil servants appointed for life and must be qualified to serve as judges or senior civil servants. It is the Authority that proposes case handlers to become a division member, they are appointed by Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. There is no explicit provision for a member of a decision division to be removed from its function. A dismissal, ordered by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, is only possible under general civil service regulations. The Authority may transfer division members from the division to any other department within the Authority. **IE**: The Public Appointments Service proposes, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment appoints the chairperson and the two to four commissions. The Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment dismisses the chairperson and the two to four commissioners. **EE:** The Director General of the Estonian Competition Authority is appointed to and released from office by the Minister of Justice on the proposal of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice. **EL**: The Board of the Hellenic Competition Commission, the decision-making body of the Authority, consists of ten members, including a President, a Vice-President, six Rapporteurs and two regular members, with their alternates. The President and the Vice-President of the Commission are selected, following a proposal of the Minister of Development, by a decision of the Council of Ministers, issued following the consent of the parliamentary Committee on Institutions and Transparency. The selection of the Rapporteurs and the two regular and alternate members of the Commission is made by the Minister of Development, following the consent of the parliamentary Committee on Institutions and Transparency, on the basis of a list of candidates, drawn up by the Selection Committee, following an open competition, which includes submission of a personal dossier and an interview. The regular and alternate members of the Competition Commission, as well as the Rapporteurs are appointed by decision of the Minister of Development and Investments, which is published in the Government Gazette. The five-member Selection Committee consists of: a) the President or Vice-President of the Council of State or the President or Vice-President of the State Legal Counsel, as Chair, b) the President or Vice-President of the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ASEP), c) a former President or Vice-President of the Competition Commission, appointed by lot, d) a TSS HEI member specialised in competition law, nominated by the Minister of Development, and e) a TSS HEI member specialised in competition economics, nominated by the Minister of Development. Disciplinary proceedings before the Disciplinary Council shall be initiated by the Council of Ministers, following a proposal of the Minister of*

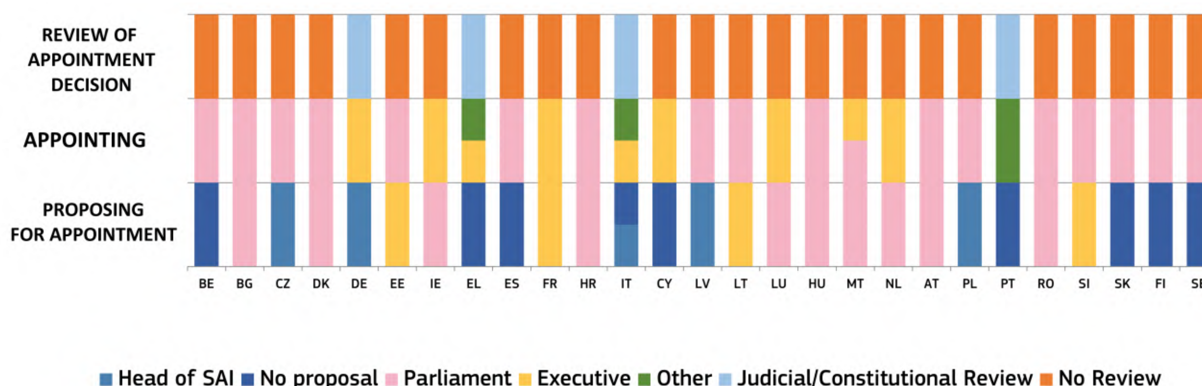
Development and Investments, with regard to the President and its members. The Disciplinary Council consists of two (2) State Counselors, one (1) Supreme Court judge and two (2) university professors, active or emeritus, specialised in competition law, in commercial, criminal or public law or economics, and their term of office shall be five years. ***ES****: The Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness proposes the 10 Board members of the CNMC, including its President and Vice-President, the Government appoints them. Parliament may veto the appointment of the proposed candidates by absolute majority (50% +1). The Government proposes the dismissal and dismisses the Board members.* ***FR****: The President of the Republic appoints all four Vice-Presidents of the Board (permanent members) as well as the 12 non-permanent members and the 2 specialist members who sit when the NCA rules on matters pertaining to regulated legal professions. The NCA Board proposes the dismissal, the President of the Republic dismisses the member of the Board.* ***HR****: The Government proposes, Parliament appoints the members of the NCA. The Government proposes the dismissal, Parliament dismisses the members of the NCA.* ***IT****: The Presidents of the House and Senate appoint the chairman and members of the Authority's Board. The Presidents of Parliament take the final decision on dismissal, once judge's decision to apply the accessory penalty of disqualification from public office is final.* ***CY****: The Minister of Energy, Commerce and Industry proposes, the Government (Council of Ministers) appoints. The Government (Council of Ministers) proposes a dismissal and dismisses.* ***LV****: The Ministry of Economics proposes the chairperson of the Competition Council and four council members, the Cabinet of Ministers appoints them. The Ministry of Economic proposes their dismissal, a committee established by the Cabinet of Ministers dismisses.* ***LT****: The Prime Minister proposes the members in the decision-making body of the Lithuanian Competition Council, the President appoints. The Prime Minister proposes the dismissal of the members in the decision-making body of the Lithuanian Competition Council, the President dismisses.* ***LU****: There is a public call for application, the President of the Competition Authority appoints. The Government proposes the dismissal, the Head of State (Grand-Duke) dismisses.* ***HU****: The President of the Hungarian Competition Authority proposes, the President of Hungary appoints the members of the Competition Council, which acts like a separated decision-making forum within the Hungarian Competition Authority. The President of the Hungarian Competition Authority proposes a dismissal, the President of Hungary dismisses the members of the Competition Council.* ***MT:*** *There is a public call for application. The Board of Governors of the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority appoints the Director General of the Office for Competition (the national administrative competition authority) by following consultation with the Minister responsible for competition matters. The Board of Governors of the Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority dismisses the Director General.* ***NL****: A selection Commission, which consists of an NCA (ACM) board member, the director of the policy directorate responsible for NCA at the Ministry, an NCA director, on request an "outsider", and a consultant of the Dutch Senior Civil Service (ABD), proposes the chair and the other two board members of the NCA to the Minister of Economic Affairs, who then proposes them further. The Council of Minister appoints them. The Ministry of Economic Affairs proposes the dismissal and dismisses the members.* ***AT****: The Government proposes the Director-General of the Federal Competition Authority, the President appoints. The Government proposes the dismissal of the Director-General of the Federal Competition Authority, the President dismisses.* ***PL****: The Prime Minister proposes and appoints the members of the NCA. The Prime Minister proposes the dismissal and dismisses the members of the NCA.* ***PT****: The Ministry of Economy proposes the members of the decision-making body of the NCA, Parliament gives a reasoned opinion, the Government appoints them. Parliament or the Council of Ministers propose a dismissal, the Council of Ministers dismisses.* ***RO****: There is an open call for application for the 9 members of the Plenum of the Competition Council. The Standing Bureaus of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate and the Legal and Economic Committees of the Chambers propose the candidates, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate elect and appoint the members. The dismissal of the members takes place de iure, when the Supreme Court decides upon an infringement.* ***SI****: The Government and the Ministry of Economy propose the members of the national competition authority, Parliament elects them. The Government proposes the dismissal, Parliament dismisses them.* ***SK****: The decision-making of the Antimonopoly Office consists of two instances, the Office and the Council of the Antimonopoly Office. In the first instance, the decision is adopted by respective department of the Office. In the second instance, the Council of the Antimonopoly Office of the SR (the "Council") decides on appeals and reviews the Office´s decisions. The chart reflects the situation of the Council of the Antimonopoly Board. The Chairperson of the Office proposes the members of the Council of the Antimonopoly Office, which consists of the Chairperson of the Office himself and six members of the Council. The Government appoints them. The Chairperson of the Office proposes the dismissal, the Government dismisses. Chairman of the Council is appointed and dismissed by the President of the Republic.* ***FI****: The Ministry of the Economic Affairs and Employment proposes the Director-General as well as the Head of Competition Division of the Competition and Consumer Authority, the Government appoints them. The Government dismisses the Directors.* ***SE****: The Government proposes and appoints the Director-General of the NCA. The Government proposes his dismissal, the Government Disciplinary Board for Higher Officials dismisses the Director-General.*

Supreme audit institutions (SAIs) are public oversight institutions which audit the use of public funds. Their principal task is to examine whether public funds are spent economically, efficiently and effectively in compliance with existing rules and regulations. Effective auditing helps build integrity in the public finances and combat corruption. It leads to the detection of illicit use of funds and corruption and helps to bring perpetrators to justice. SAIs are also part of the national systems of checks and balances in safeguarding the rule of law. Cooperation between the SAIs of the EU and the European Court of Auditors (ECA) principally takes place within the framework of the Contact Committee[138]).

The organisation of SAIs varies across the EU and there is no uniform model for all Member States. SAIs can be divided into two types: bodies with judicial authority ([139]) and those without. SAIs are either headed by a single person ([140]) or governed by a collegiate body ([141]). SAIs need to be independent operationally and financially autonomous. International standards on the independence of SAIs indicate that the head of the SAI and members of collegial institutions need to be appointed, reappointed or removed by a process that ensures independence from the executive ([142]).

Figures 63 and 64 present the authorities involved in the appointment and dismissal of the head of the SAI or its members, depending on whether the SAI is a single-headed or a collegiate body.

Figure 63: Supreme audit institutions: appointment (*) *(source: European Commission with the Contact Committee on Supreme Audit Institutions)*



*(*) **BE**: Collegiate body - The Members of the Court of Audit are judges. They are elected to the Court of Audit by the House of Representatives. **BG**: Collegiate Body - The Vice-Presidents and the Members of the Audit Office are elected by the Parliament upon a proposal by the President of the Audit Office. The President is elected by the Parliament. **CZ**: Collegiate Body - The Chamber of Deputies elects the 15 Members based on the proposal made by the President of the SAI. The President and the Vice-President are appointed by the President of the Republic based on a proposal from the Chamber of Deputies. **DK**: The Auditor General is appointed by the Speaker of the Danish Parliament, upon recommendation by Parliament's Public Accounts Committee and approval of Parliaments' Standing Orders*

[138] The Contact Committee structure consists of the Contact Committee itself, composed of the heads of the EU SAIs and the ECA, the Liaison Officers, who provide an active network of professional contacts around Europe, as well as working groups, networks and task forces on specific audit topics.

[139] BE, FR, EL, IT, PT, ES.

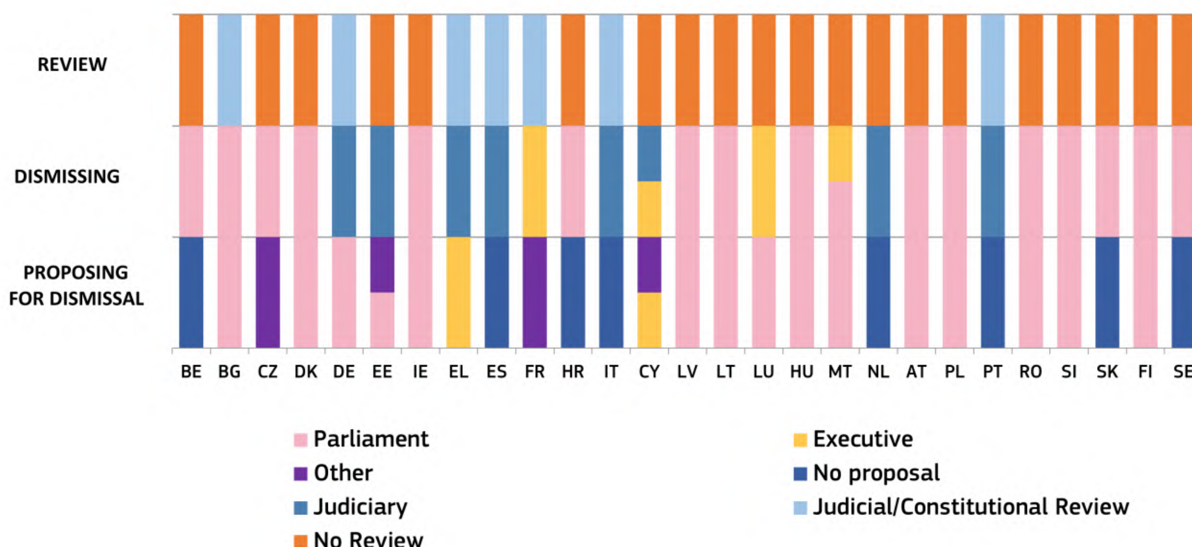
[140] AT, HR, CY, DK, EE, FI, HU, IRE, LT, MT, SK, SE.

[141] BE, BG, CZ, FR, DE, EL, LV, LU, NL, PL, PT, RO, SI, ES.

[142] INTOSAI (2019), Mexico Declaration on SAI Independence, Principle 2.

*Committee. **DE**: The membrers of the SAI are appointed by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany on a proposal of the President of SAI. The President is elected by the two houses of parliament on a proposal from the federal government and is appointed by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany. **EE**: Proposal: President of the Republic (EE consider the President of the Republic not to be part of the executive), Decision: Parliament. **IE**: The Comptroller and Auditor General is appointed by the Irish President on nomination by the Parliament. **EL**: Collegiate body - the Court of Audit is the Supreme Financial Court. Its members are judges, appointed by Presidential Decree upon the decision of the Supreme Judicial Council. Its president and vice-presidents are appointed by Presidential Decree upon a proposal from the Council of Ministers, following non binding opinions from Parliament and the Court's plenun. There is no review of decisions to appoint the President/vice-presidents. **ES**: Collegiate body - Counsellors are judges, appointed by the Spanish Parliament (six by Congress and six by the Senate). The President of the Court of Auditors is appointed by the King of Spain from among the Counsellors of the Court, following a proposal by the Court's Plenum. **FR**: Collegiate body - The First president and the presidents of the chambers are magistrates, appointed by a decree of the President of the Republic issued by the Council of Ministers. **HR**: The Auditor General is appointed by the Parliament on the basis of a proposal by the committee responsible for selection and appointment, together with an opinion provided by the committee responsible for finances and the State Budget. **IT**: Collegiate body. The Court of Audit has central and regional offices. Its members are magistrates, recruited by means of an open competition. The Government has the power to appoint a quota of magistrates of the Court of Audit, after consulting the Presidency of the Court of Audit. The President of the Court is appointed by Decree of the President of the Republic upon proposal of the Council of Ministers (which must consult the Council of the Presidency of the Court of Audit). **CY**: The President of the Republic appoints the Auditor General and the Deputy Auditor General. No other body participates in the appointment. **LV**: Collegiate body.The members of the SAI are appointed by the Parliament upon recommendation by the Auditor General. The Auditor General is appointed by the Parliament. **LT**: Proposal: President of the Republic; Appointment: Parliament. **LU**: Collegiate body, the President and members of the SAI are appointed by the Grand Duke on the proposal of Parliament, which prepares a list with candidates. **HU**: The President of the State Audit Office is elected by a two-thirds majority of the Members of the National Assembly, following a proposal by the parliamentary standing committee dealing with issues pertaining to the audit office. **MT**: The Auditor General is an officer of the House of Representatives and is appointed by decision of the President of the Republic, implementing the resolution of the House of Representatives (two-thirds-majority). The President has no discretion in this respect. **NL**: Collegiate body. The members of the Court of Audit are appointed by Royal Decree from a list of three persons drawn up by the Lower House of Parliament. Its President is appointed among its members by the Head of State acting on the recommendation of the Government. **AT**: The President of the Austrian Court of Audit is elected by a two-thirds-majority in Parliament, on proposal of its Main Committee. **PL**: Collegiate body. The Members are appointed by the Speaker of Sejm (lower chamber of Parliament) upon request of the President of the SAI. The President is appointed by the Sejm upon consent by the Senate, following a proposal of the Speaker of Sejm or a group of at least 35 of its members. **PT**: Collegiate body. The members of the Court of Auditors are judges, recruited through a public competition. The President is appointed by the President of the Republic on a proposal from the Government. **RO**: Collegiate body The members and the president of the Court of Accounts are proposed and appointed by the Legislature. **SI**: Collegiate body. Its Members are the President and two Vice-Presidents, appointed by Parliament (absolute majority vote) on a proposal from the President of the Republic. **SK**: The Head of SAI is elected by Parliament. **FI**: The Auditor General is elected by Parliament. **SE**: The Auditor General and the Deputy Auditor General are elected and appointed by Parliament.*

Figure 64: Supreme audit institutions: dismissal (*) *(source: European Commission with the Contact Committee on Supreme Audit Institutions)*



*(*) **CZ**: The Members of the SAI can be dismissed by the Chamber of Deputies following the decision of the Disciplinary Chamber of the SAI proposing the dismissal. The President and the Vice-President of the SAI could be dismissed by the President of the Republic on the proposal of the Chamber of Deputies. **DK**: The Auditor General is removed from office by decision of the Speaker of the Parliament, following a complaint to the Public Accounts Committee and after consulting the Deputy Speakers. **DE**: There is no specific dismissal procedure; due to a lack of possible re-election, the head of SAI are dismissed at the end of their 12-year term of office. Members of the SAI can however be subject to disciplinary procedures which can lead to a dismissal in certain cases. Those procedures are held before a specialised senate of the Federal Supreme Court ('Dienstgericht des Bundes'). The proposal for such a procedure would be made by the President of either chamber of Parliament. **EE**: The Auditor General can be dismissed by decision of the Supreme Court following a request by the Chancellor of Justice with the consent of the majority of the Parliament. **IE**: The Auditor General can be removed from office by decision of the President only upon resolutions passed by both chambers of Parliament calling for his removal. **EL**: Members are judges.Proposal for Dismissal/Initiating of disciplinary actions: Minister of Justice; Decision for Dismissal: Supreme Disciplinary Council. **ES**: Members of the Court of Audit can only be removed for a serious breach of their duties following judicial proceedings. **FR**: The appointment authority decides on removals on the recommendation of the High Council of the Court of Accounts in its disciplinary formation. **HR**: The decision on removal is made by the Croatian Parliament.*
*IT: Magistrates of the Court can only be removed following disciplinary or criminal proceedings before the Judicial Council of the Court of Audit. The President of the Court can not be revoked from his role, which he leaves because of voluntary resignation or retirement because of the age limit. **CY**: The Auditor General can only be dismissed for serious misconduct following a judgment by the Supreme Constitutional Court. The President of the Republic and the Attorney General can submit a request for dismissal. The President formally issues the decision dismissing the Auditor General but he is bound by the judgment. **LV**: The Auditor General and members of the Council of the State Audit Office may be removed from office by Parliament only on the basis of a court judgment in a criminal case. **LT**: Parliament is competent to release and dismiss the Auditor General. The grounds for release and dismissal are exhaustivelly listed in the legislation. **LU**: Removal by grand-ducal decree upon proposal by the Parliament with the prior opinion of the SAI. **HU**: The President of the State Audit Office can be removed from office by decision of the Parliament. The procedure is initiated by the competent parliamentary committee. **MT**: Removal on grounds of proved inability to perform the functions of his/her Office or proved misbehaviour.Proposal: House of Representatives (two-thirds-majority). Decision: The President of the Republic formally issues the decision but he is bound by Parliament's address. **NL**: The Supreme Court can dismiss or suspend the members of the SAI. **AT**: Decision for Dismissal requires a two-thirds-majority in the National Council. **PL**: Proposal to dismiss can be made by the Marshal of the Sejm or a group of at least 35 Members of the Sejm (the lower chamber of Pariament); the dismissal decision is taken by the Sejm and by the Senate, which needs to consent to the dismissal by the Sejm. **PT**: The members of the SAI are not removable, except for disciplinary proceedings, held within the SAI. A standing committee, presided over by the*

President and composed of the Vice President and a judge from each Chamber elected by their peers, is responsible for the exercise of disciplinary authority, with a possible appeal to the general plenary. The Head of the SAI may be removed by the Head of State, upon the proposal of the Government. In practice, this possibility has never been used. ***RO****: The members of the SAI can only be dismissed by Parliament, upon the proposal of the standing committees for budget, finance and banks of the two Chambers of Parliament.* ***SI****: A minimum of 15 members of Parliament can propose the dismissal of the President or the Vice-presidents of the SAI. The final decision is taken by Parliament.* ***SK****: Parliament can remove the President/Vice-presidents under the conditions prescribed by the legislation.* ***FI****: Parliament decides on removal acting on proposal of the Parliament's Office Commission (Speaker, the two Deputy-Speakers and four other members of Parliament).* ***SE****: Parliament may dismiss an Auditor General from the assignment only if the Auditor General no longer fulfils the requirements that apply to the assignment or if the Auditor General has been guilty of serious negligence (three-quarters of the voters and more than half of the members of the Riksdag).*

3.2. Summary of indicators relevant for the single market

Beyond the courts, prosecution services and other judicial bodies, the 2025 Justice Scoreboard presents for the first time characteristics of several other public authorities, which are tasked with applying EU law in specific areas, such as anti-corruption, public procurement and competition.

Figures 59 and 60 present how companies perceive the independence of the first instance public procurement review bodies and of the national competition authorities.

The 2025 Justice Scoreboard further presents characteristics of independent authorities which are relevant for the functioning of the single market. Figure 61 presents the way in which members and/or heads of first instance public procurement review bodies are appointed and dismissed, while Figure 62 presents the same for national competition authorities, and Figures 63 and 64 present the authorities involved in the appointment and dismissal of the head of the supreme audit institutions or its members, depending on whether it is a single-headed or a collegiate body.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The 2025 EU Justice Scoreboard further develops an in-depth insight into the effectiveness of justice systems in the Member States. The indicators present continuous efforts to improve the efficiency, quality and independence of the justice systems. In addition, they show certain structural aspects of other public authorities tasked with applying EU law. However, challenges remain to ensure the public's full trust in the legal systems of all Member States. The information in the EU Justice Scoreboard contributes to the monitoring carried out as part of the European Rule of Law Cycle and feeds into the Commission's annual Rule of Law report.