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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR THE EFFICIENCY OF JUSTICE  
(CEPEJ)

GUIDELINES FOR THE ONLINE PUBLICATION OF JUDICIAL DECISIONS  
AIMING AT FURTHERING LEGAL KNOWLEDGE

*Document adopted by the CEPEJ at its 43rd plenary meeting  
(Strasbourg, 3 – 4 December 2024)*



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JUDICIAL DECISIONS  
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21 November 2025

- Rado Brezovar (Supreme Court of Slovenia),
- Agata Cevc (Supreme Court of Slovenia),
- Pietro Dunn (University of Bologna),
- Simone Ginzburg (independent consultant),
- Alexandre Palanco (Catholic University of Lyon),
- Salvatore Sapienza (University of Bologna),
- Giulia Venditti (University of Bologna).



Digital Marketplace > Lot 2: Cloud software > Legal AI ChatBot

Legalytics Ltd

# Legal AI ChatBot

Legalytics designs customer journeys, conversation dialog, user experience and knowledge base for a cloud based chatbot that will fulfil the use cases for Legal industry / Law firms.

## Features

- Human-like AI chatbots in any language
- Powerful API to integrate with any back-end
- Embed with enterprise and social collaboration
- CRM Integration using API
- Seamless interface with Legal apps used by

## Ask the Archives:

### The EP Archives Unit Launches its first Generative AI tool

*The historical archives of the European Parliament now speak directly to citizens*



EN

Home > News and media > News > Commission launches a new general-purpose AI tool - GPT@EC

NEWS ARTICLE | 22 October 2024 | Directorate-General for Digital Services | 2 min read

# Commission launches a new general-purpose AI tool - GPT@EC

The Commission has released a pilot for GPT@EC, a secure general-purpose corporate tool using generative artificial intelligence (AI).

The tool has been developed by the Directorate-General for Digital Services (DIGIT), and is based on a successful previous project, GPT@JRC, that the Joint Research Centre (JRC) has put in place for generative-AI scientific and research purposes. GPT@EC offers an alternative to third-party generative AI tools, limiting the risks of mishandling Commission data.

# Black box risk in Data Base of Court Decisions with AI

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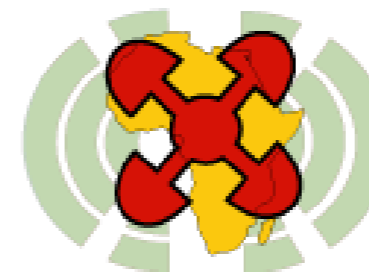
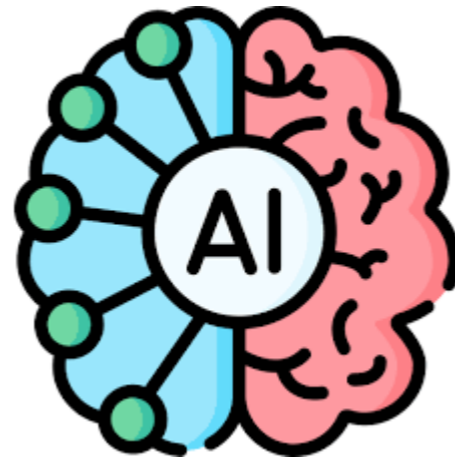
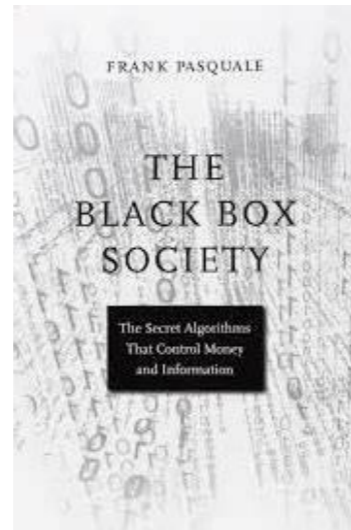
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**Your right of data access**

8.1. You are entitled to receive a copy of your personal data that is in our possession (your right of data access).

**Your right to erasure and rectification**

8.2 You may request the deletion of personal data or the correction of inaccurate personal data (your right to erasure and rectification). Please note that we may keep certain information concerning you, as required by law, or when we have a legal basis to do so (e.g., our legitimate interest to keep the platform safe and secure for other users).

**Your right to object to processing**

8.3 You have the right to object at any time (i) to the processing of your personal data for the purpose of direct marketing, or (ii) to the processing of your personal data for other purposes on grounds relating to your particular situation (your right to object to processing). Please note that in the latter case, this right only applies if the processing of your personal data is based on our legitimate interest.

**Your right to restriction to processing**

8.4 You have the right to restrict the processing of your personal data (your right to restriction of processing). Please note that this only applies if (i) you contested the accuracy of your personal data and we are verifying the accuracy of the personal data, (ii) you exercised your right to object and we are still considering, as foreseen by the applicable law, whether our legitimate grounds to process your personal data in that case override your interests, rights and freedoms; or (iii) your personal data has been processed by us in an unlawful way but you either oppose the erasure of the personal data or want us to keep your personal data in order to establish, exercise or defend a legal claim.

Lawyer-readable

Human-readable



**Explicability**  
**Technical standards**



# Objective: create guidelines

- Promote the digitalisation and publication of court decisions to **increase transparency and access to justice**, **harmonisation** of case law, and further use of the data in appropriate cyberjustice tools (e.g., case law search engines, decision support systems)
- Provide guidance on compliance with human rights standards and provide illustrations of technical solutions (e.g., anonymisation and pseudonymisation) in line with other GT-Cyberjust and CEPEJ tools

# Legal basis

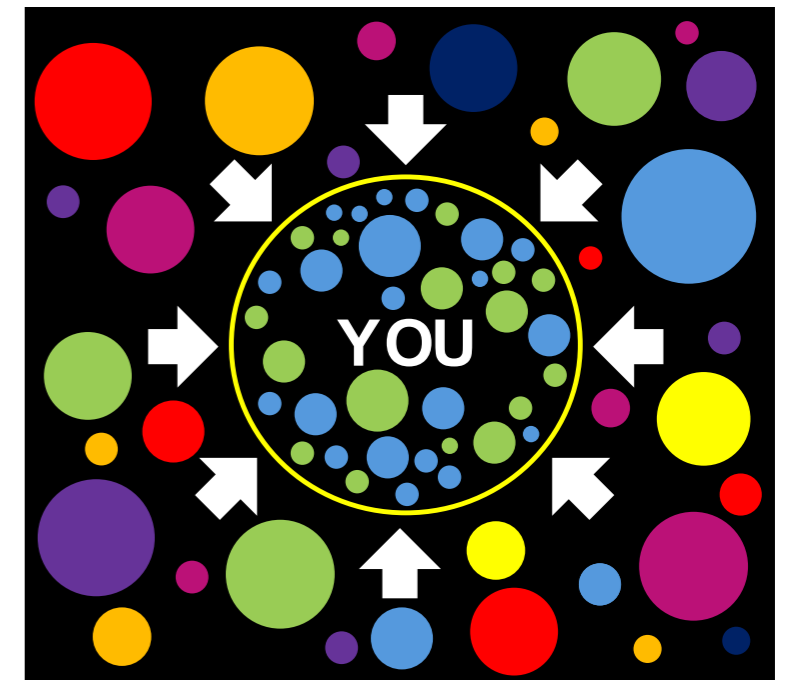
4. These guidelines provide practical advice -methodological, technical and organisational –to States on the design, implementation and use of these databases, with the aim of establishing a common framework guided by respect for the rights guaranteed by the European **Convention on Human Rights** (ECHR), the **Council of Europe's Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law**(CETS225) the protection of personal data in the light of the **Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Personal Data** (CETS108), as well as the principles set out in the **European Ethical Charter on the Use of Artificial Intelligence** (AI) in Judicial Systems and their Environment (the CEPEJCharter),and Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of June 13, 2024 laying down harmonized rules on artificial intelligence.

## **CEPEJ Working Group on Cyberjustice and AI**

6. These guidelines have been prepared by the CEPEJ Working Group on Cyberjustice and AI (CEPEJ-GT-CYBERJUST) based on the contribution of experts. It is leaning on numerous texts relating to the digital transformation of justice and the use of AI drawn up by the various bodies of the Council of Europe and other international organisations. The analysis of a questionnaire distributed to member States through the European Cyberjustice Network (ECN), has equally served as an important knowledge base.

# Motivations

- ❑ Open and transparent justice
- ❑ Judicial legitimacy and public confidence in the judicial system
- ❑ Better access to information, justice, and legal knowledge



# Principles

- ❑ **human rights-based publication:** the publication of judicial decisions and their digital preparation should respect human rights as well as democratic principles and the rule of law, including the right to a fair trial, the independence of judges and the criminal procedure of each Member State. **In particular, the online repository of decisions should not allow the manipulation or application of technical "filter bubbles" of information, nor limit autonomous access to legal information through search engines.**
- ❑ **access to decisions according to criteria that respect fairness between users, impartiality and non-discrimination:** access to judicial decisions should guarantee fairness between users, impartiality in the presentation of information, and non-discrimination, whatever the pre-selection criteria or filters used by the search engine;
- ❑ **responsible, explicable and transparent search criteria:** the search should be justifiable at all times from the point of view of reliability (e.g. the right to be forgotten), the criteria adopted by the search engine (e.g., classification) and transparency in the document management policy;
- ❑ **user-centred publication:** the different needs of users -judges, lawyers, journalists, laypersons, etc. -in terms of access to legal information, accessibility, ease of search, transparency, easy viewing and comprehensibility must be taken into account;
- ❑ **technical neutrality of the chosen solutions:** solutions should not favour a specific technology or supplier, but should be neutral, open, inclusive and geared towards minimising the digital divide.

# Guidelines

Ethics

## A. Ethics and sustainability

- Guideline No. 1 on respect for human rights and the principle of transparency
- Guideline No. 2 on extraction and conservation
- Guidelines No. 3 on lean development and environmental sustainability

Complete

## B. Availability and completeness

- Guideline No. 4 on completeness of the information made available**
- Guideline No. 5 on categorisation and labelling**

Accessible

## C. Accessibility

- Guideline No. 6 on online publication**
- Guideline No. 7 on search functionalities**
- Guideline No. 8 on advanced functionalities and user experience**
- Guideline No. 9 on making decisions available in machine readable format**

Security

## D. Security

- Guideline No. 10 on cyber security
- Guideline No. 11 on user data protection**
- Guideline No. 12 on anonymisation and pseudonymisation**

Organization

## E. Organisation

- Guideline No. 13 on publication governance
- Guideline No. 14 on design and development
- Guideline No. 15 on human capital and training
- Guideline No. 16 on continuous process improvement

I.	Introduction .....	3
II.	Context .....	3
	A. Open and transparent justice .....	3
	B. Judicial legitimacy and public confidence in the judicial system .....	4
	C. Better access to information, justice, and legal knowledge .....	4
III.	General principles .....	5
IV.	Guidelines .....	5
	A. Ethics and sustainability .....	5
	Guideline No. 1 on respect for human rights and the principle of transparency .....	5
	Guideline No. 2 on extraction and conservation .....	6
	Guidelines No. 3 on lean development and environmental sustainability .....	6
	B. Availability and completeness .....	6
	Guideline No. 4 on completeness of the information made available .....	6
	Guideline No. 5 on categorisation and labelling .....	7
	C. Accessibility .....	7
	Guideline No. 6 on online publication .....	7
	Guideline No. 7 on search functionalities .....	8
	Guideline No. 8 on advanced functionalities and user experience .....	8
	Guideline No. 9 on making decisions available in machine-readable format .....	9
	D. Security .....	9
	Guideline No. 10 on cyber security .....	9
	Guideline No. 11 on user data protection .....	9
	Guideline No. 12 on anonymisation and pseudonymisation .....	10
	E. Organisation .....	10
	Guideline No. 13 on publication governance .....	10
	Guideline No. 14 on design and development .....	11
	Guideline No. 15 on human capital and training .....	11
	Guideline No. 16 on continuous process improvement .....	12

96 paragraphs

## A. Ethics and sustainability

### Guideline No. 1 on respect for human rights and the principle of transparency

25. The methods and criteria used to **select, label, summarise, categorise, aggregate or group similar judicial decisions, assign a relevance score and provide suggestions** (including those generated by virtual assistants under the supervision of the user) should be **explained transparently** and as clearly as possible, and made available to end-users on the portal. **In particular, any use of AI should be clearly notified.**
26. The **immediacy of publication** is fundamental to the implementation of the principles of accessibility, transparency and consistency. Nevertheless, to ensure respect for the right to a fair trial, judicial decisions should not be published before they have been notified to the interested parties.

## Guideline No. 2 on extraction and conservation

28. Judicial decisions published online should be **reliable and durable**, by being extracted directly from court systems and accompanied by relevant **metadata**. The use of structured formats and **long-term preservation standards** to maintain the integrity of the information beyond the evolution of technologies should be encouraged, thus ensuring the continued accessibility of the data, but also its future interoperability.

- Standard (e.g., Akoma Ntoso XML)
- Metadata (e.g., DCAT\_AP, Linked Open Data)
- Preservation over time

## **B. Availability and completeness**

### **Guideline No.4 on completeness of the information made available**

33. Comprehensiveness ensures that the relevant aspects of the judicial system are accessible to the public and legal professionals. This approach strengthens confidence in the judicial system and enables public scrutiny of the work of the courts.

- Unfiltered online publication.
- Case law of European and international courts.
- Summary of the decision should always include the full text.

# Guideline No. 5 on categorisation and labelling

## Minimum standards for categorisation and labelling of judicial decisions published online should be put in place.

39. The **definition of balanced vocabularies** and their continuous updating ensure that legal information is labelled in a way that is relevant, adaptable, and evolutionary. These precautions not only ensure accurate and exhaustive categorisation, but also enhance access to and **interoperability** of legal data over time.

- Standard ELI and ECLI
- Clear labelling method
- Thesaurus updated and published

“a balanced and exhaustive categorisation, avoiding focusing solely on the topics most frequently addressed in case law or most frequently searched for by users.”

## C. Accessibility

### Guideline No. 6 on online publication

44. A **single national portal** or website for consulting judicial decisions, guaranteeing effective and inclusive access should be put in place. Transparency and trust in the judicial system implies **free public access** to decisions, which contributes to the establishment of a justice system that is more comprehensible, open and connected to the needs of citizens and experts.

- Standard of Open Data
- Permanent URI to navigate the digital resources

## Guideline No. 7 on search functionalities

57. Users should know whether search systems are **AI-driven and whether they have access to "search algorithms"**. In all cases, the model, approach and parameters of the search algorithm should be clearly stated and explained, in line with the principle of transparency.

## Guideline No. 8 on advanced functionalities and user experience

62. Advanced tools should be provided (e.g. **conversational chatbots**) to enhance document retrieval or access to **AI-generated summaries** of decisions regarding a certain legal aspect or state of affairs. These tools should be based on a robust methodology that should be certified and tested in accordance with the standards of Council of Europe Convention 108 and Regulation (EU) 2024/1689.

**Article 50: Transparency Obligations for Providers and Deployers of Certain AI Systems**

## Guideline No. 9 on making decisions available in machine-readable format

63. Decisions in **machine-readable format** and judicial **metadata** in open data should be made as accessible as possible, and their re-use should be governed by **appropriate licences**. This promotes transparency and open science, while guaranteeing respect for legal, ethical, and human rights principles, in particular the principle of equality of arms.

- ❑ Open data
- ❑ API
- ❑ Metadata
- ❑ Re-use using Open License
- ❑ Machine-readable format (e.g., XML, HTML, etc.)

## **D. Security**

### **Guideline No. 10 on cyber security**

67. Preventive cyber-security measures for the online publication of judicial decisions should be put in place. Online decision publication sites or portals contain sensitive information. They can therefore be targets for malicious cyber-attacks: data theft, service interruption or sabotage, alteration or manipulation of the content of decisions for disinformation purposes, etc.

**Guideline No. 11 on user data protection**

**Guideline No. 12 on anonymisation and pseudonymisation**

## E. Organisation

### Guideline No. 13 on publication governance

80. The establishment of **sustainable organisational structures**, consultation with legal professionals and cooperation between all the services involved should ensure the integrity, interoperability and compliance of publication with the applicable legal standards -particularly in terms of **data protection**.

## Guideline No.14 on design and development

85. Emphasis should be placed on the need for **the judiciary to strategically plan** and assess requirements for the publication of judicial decisions, taking into account end-user specifications and **technological developments**. It is important to involve judges and to consult external experts to incorporate best practice and new technologies, such as AI, while respecting ethical principles and human rights. These measures ensure that systems remain adapted to the needs of the various categories of users and meet the challenges posed by technological developments.

## **Guideline No.15 on human capital and training**

89. The system for publishing judicial decisions online should have adequate and qualified human resources to operate effectively. Ongoing specialist training and strategic skills management should ensure the sustainability and competence of the staff involved in the process.

## **Guideline No.16 on continuous process improvement**

94. It is important to create helpdesk, while incorporating monitoring mechanisms to constantly improve the quality and effectiveness of the system.

- satisfaction surveys

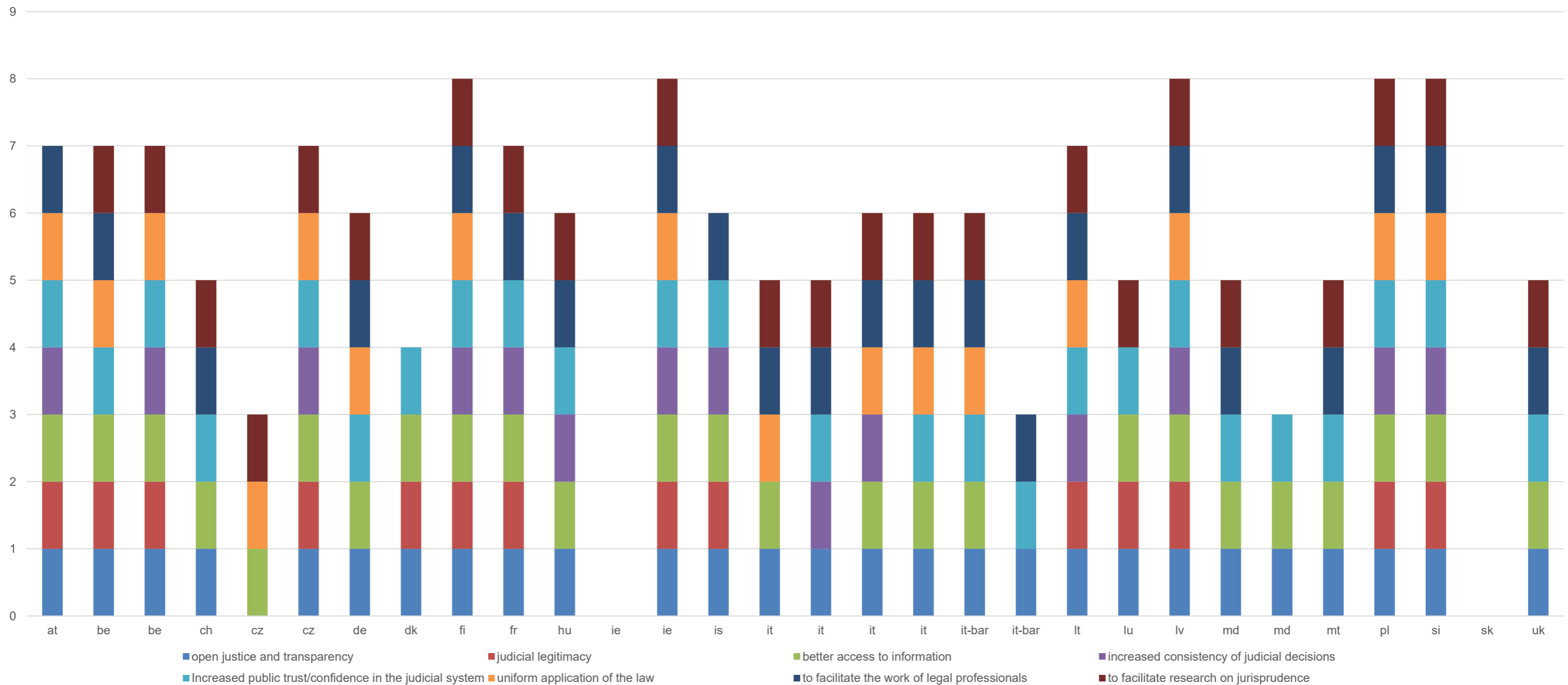
132 questions

30 surveys, for 21 countries are here presented

AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, DK, FI, FR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MD, MT, PL, SI, SK, UK

8.556 answers: 4.093 were of null value, whereas 4.463 had some value

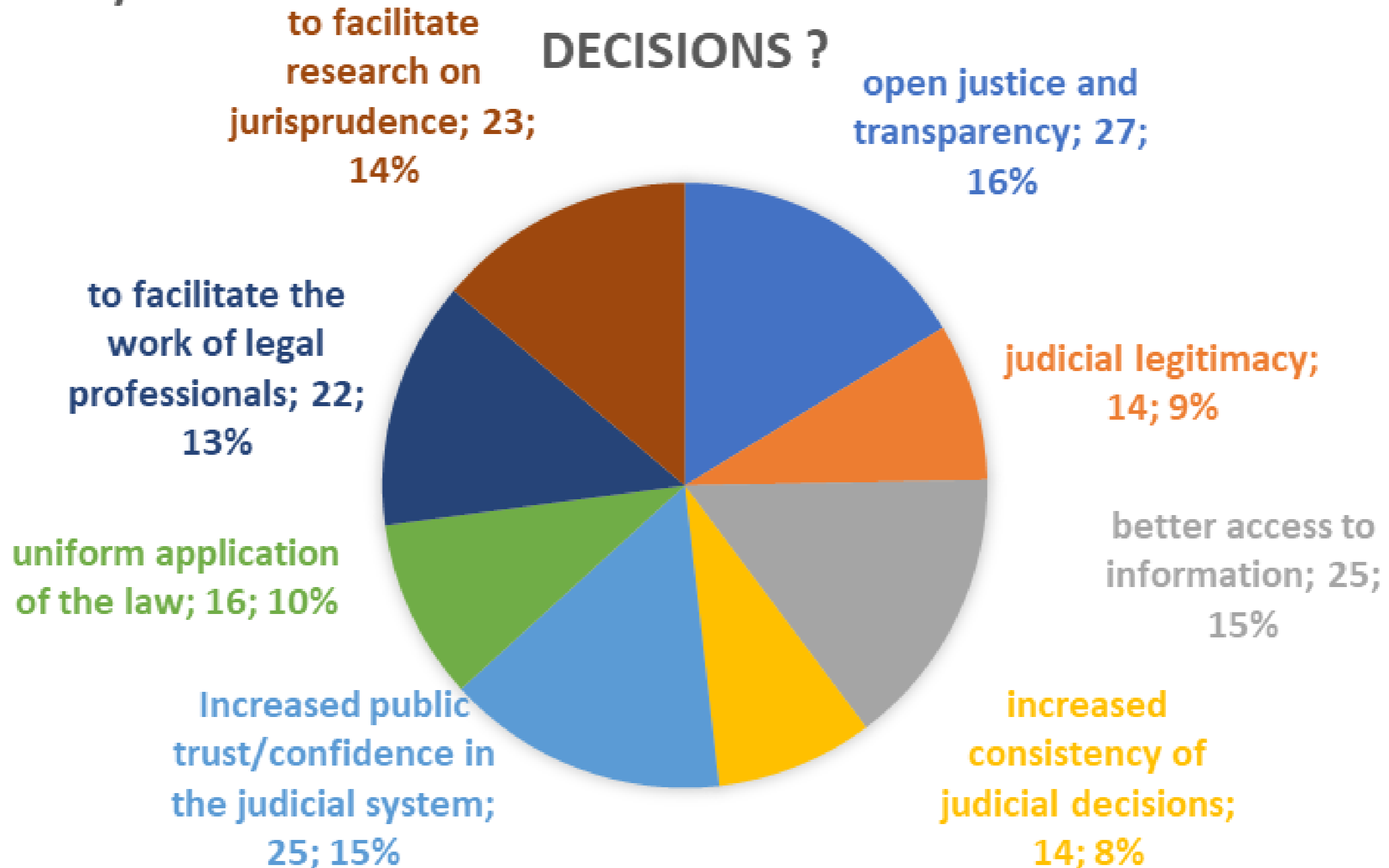
Q1. According to your understanding, what is the goal/objective pursued by the publication of court decisions ?



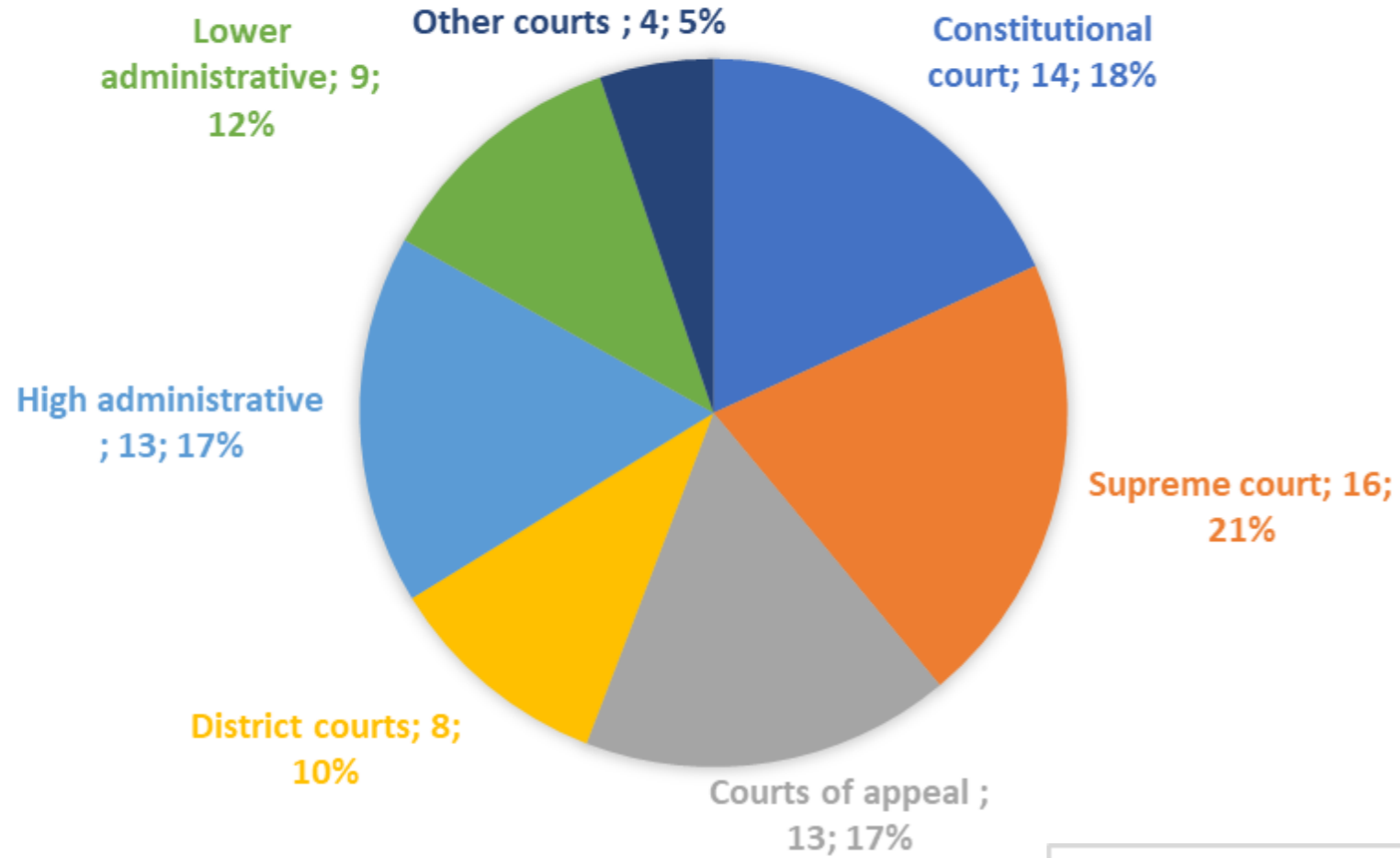
# Goal for the accessibility of case-law

Q1.ACCORDING TO YOUR UNDERSTANDING, WHAT IS THE GOAL/OBJECTIVE PURSUED BY THE PUBLICATION OF COURT

DECISIONS ?

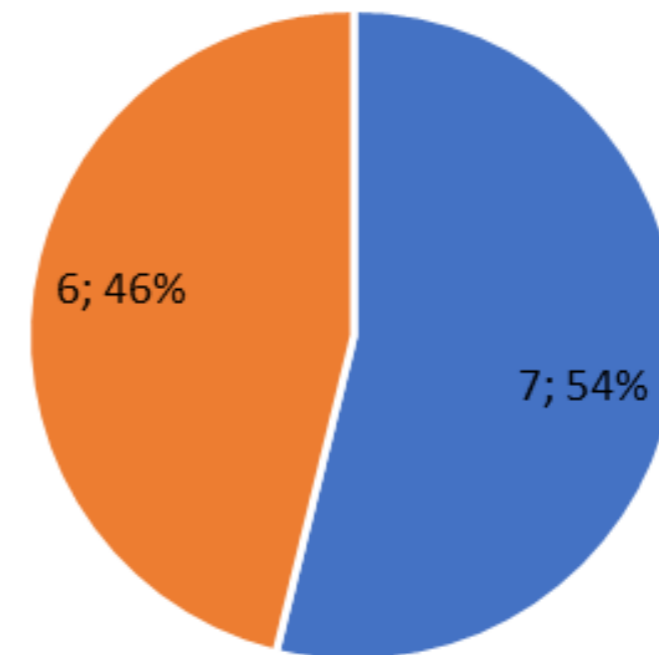


## Q2. DECISIONS OF WHICH COURTS ARE PUBLISHED IN DIGITAL FORMAT FOR PUBLIC ACCESS AND FOR INTERNAL ACCESS?



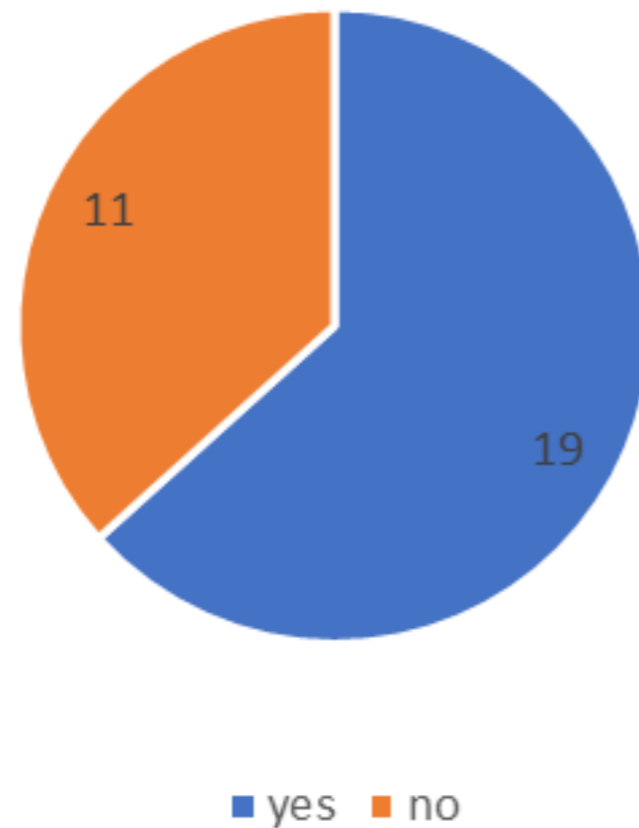
# Completeness

## Q4. Do you select the court decisions before publication?



■ All the court decisions are published ■ Only the high court's decisions are published

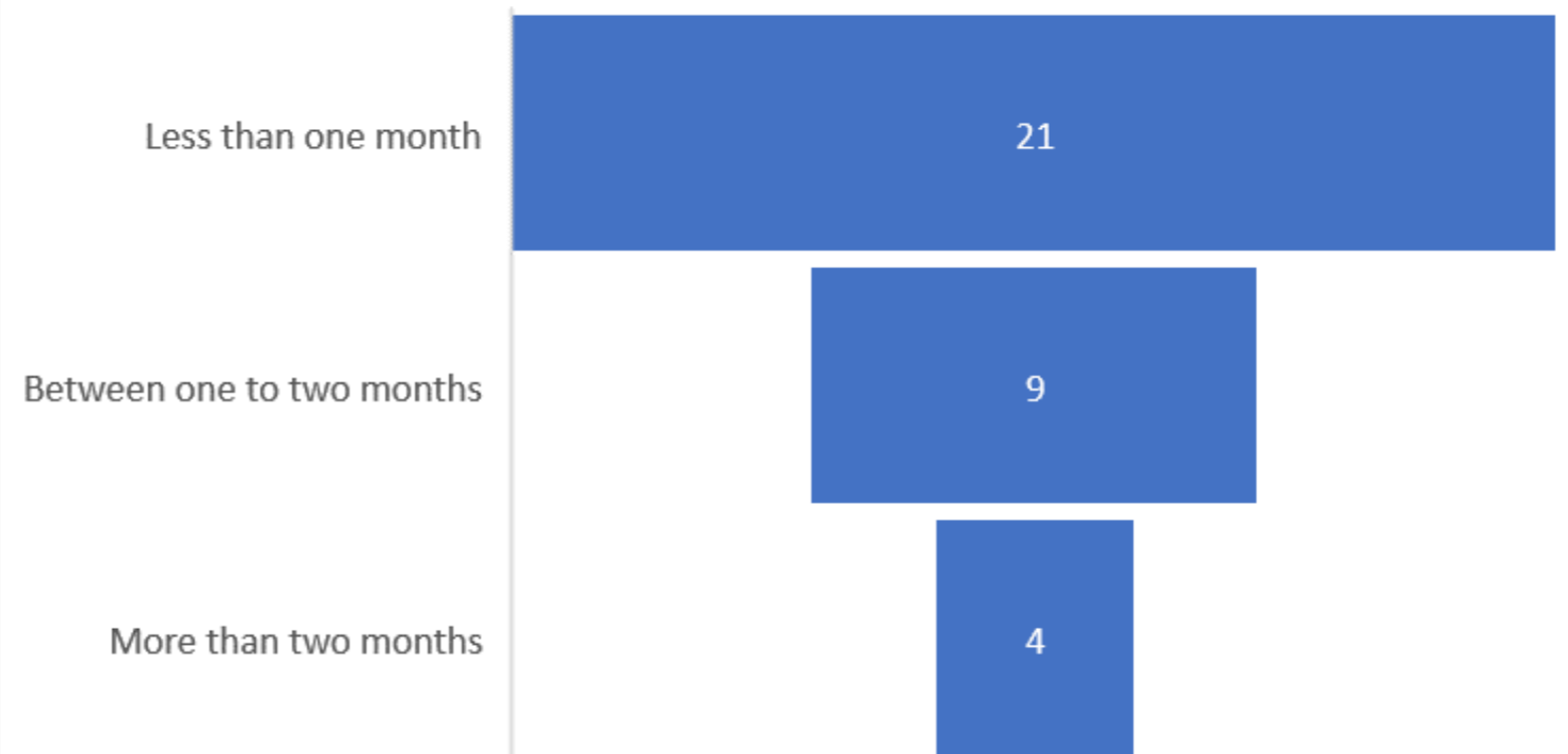
Q12. Is there a legal framework for classification and/or anonymization? If yes, please describe.



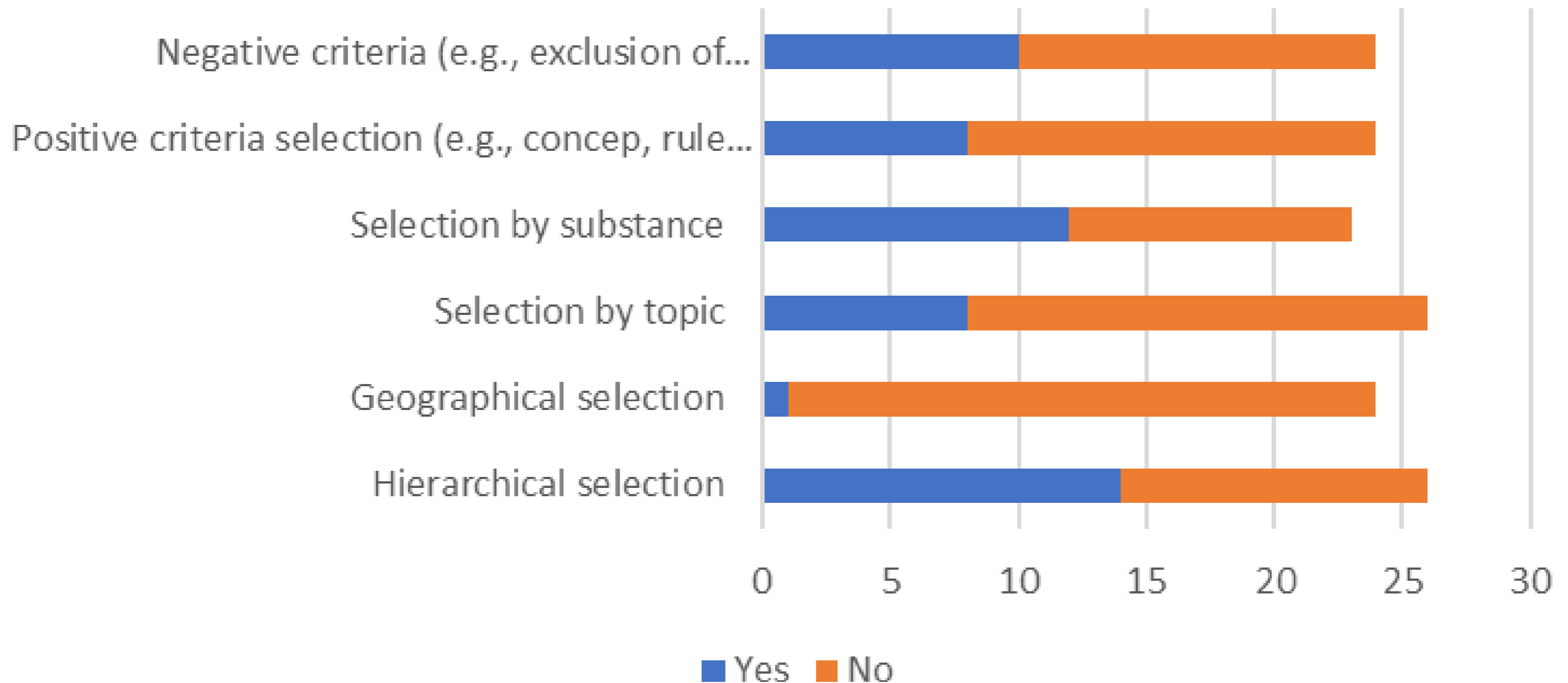
## Framework

- 82% delivery of case-law after the official communication to the parties
- With periodicity less than one month
- License strategy is very weak

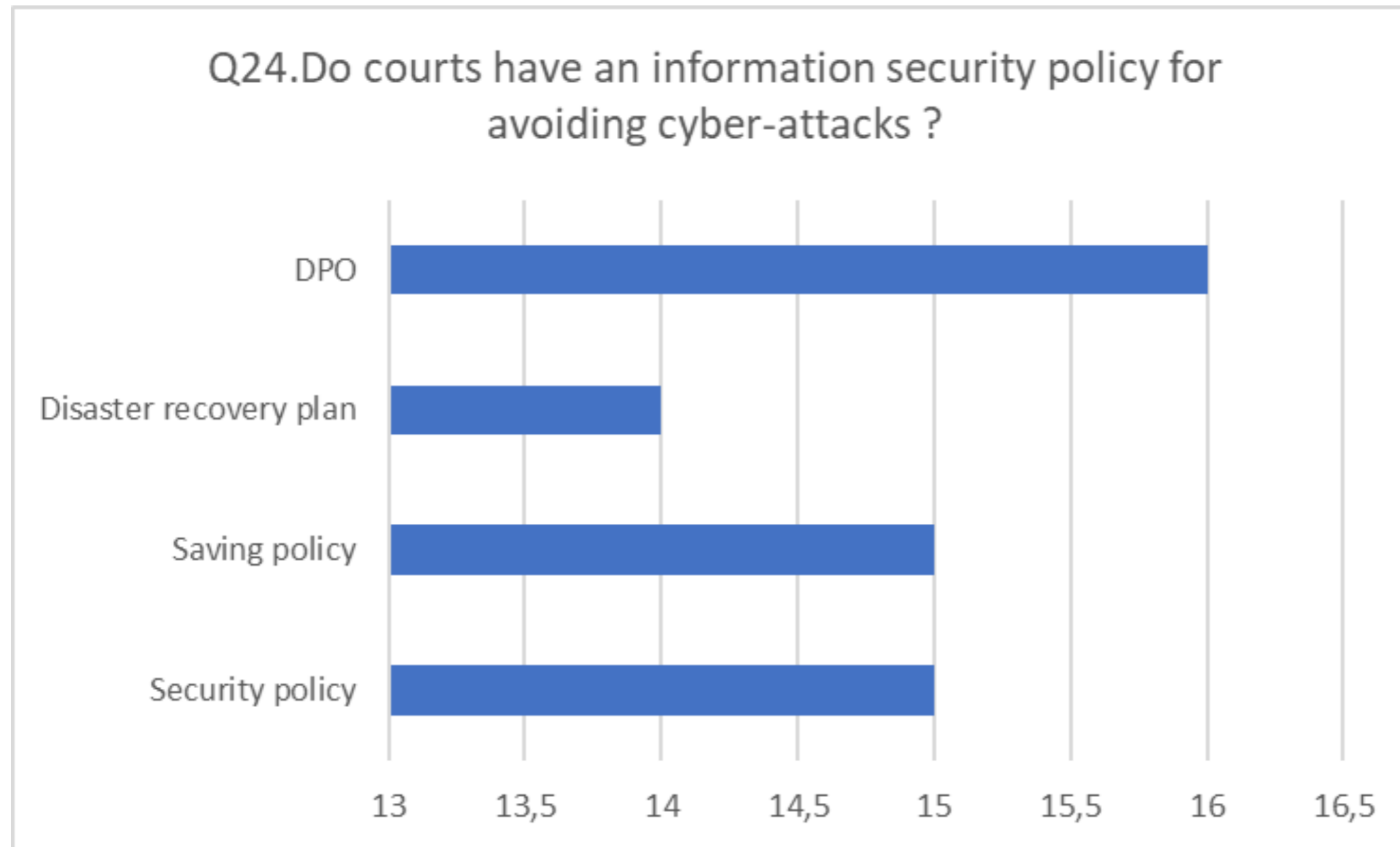
Q18. How long does it take for the decisions to be available online?



## Q6. Please choose the criteria that apply for the publication of decisions



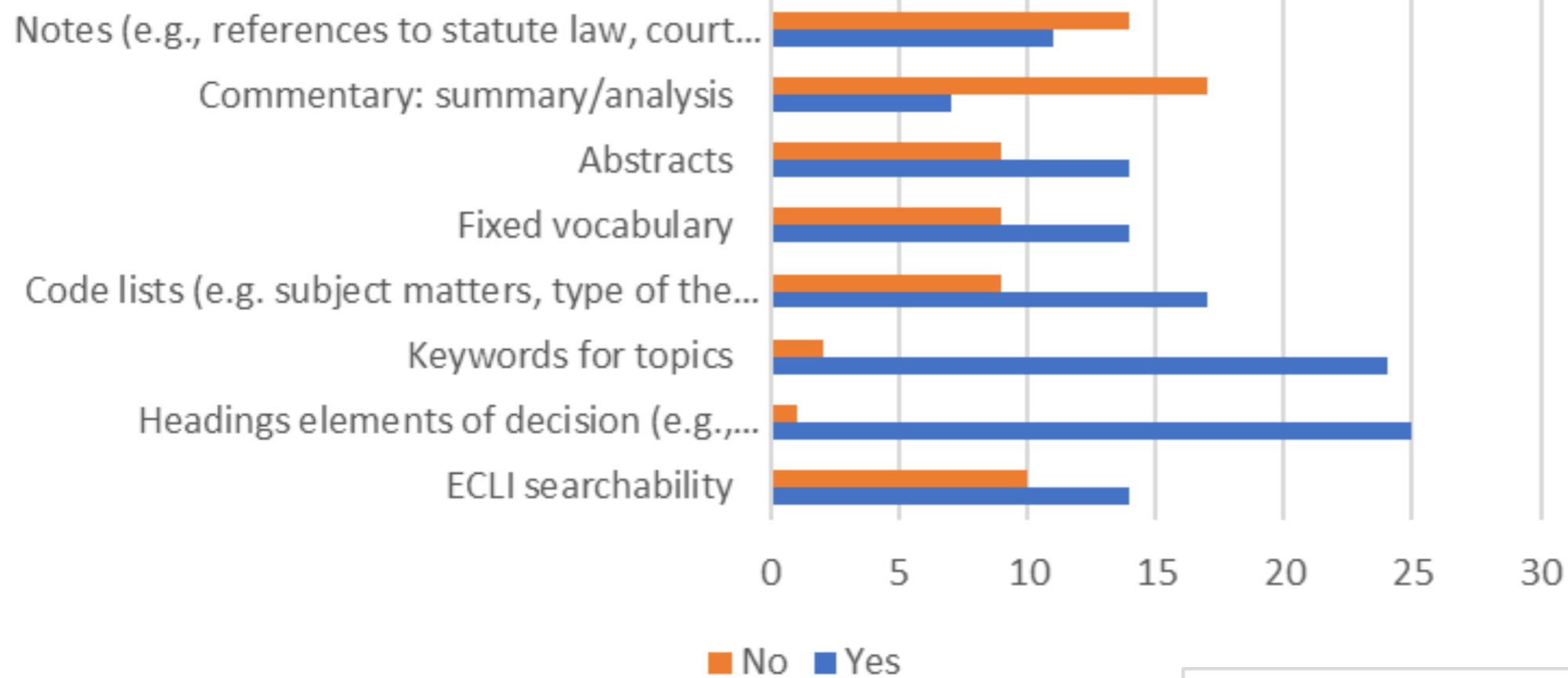
# Security



Missing a security policy in case of data breach/ request of «right to be forgotten»/request of de-anonymization

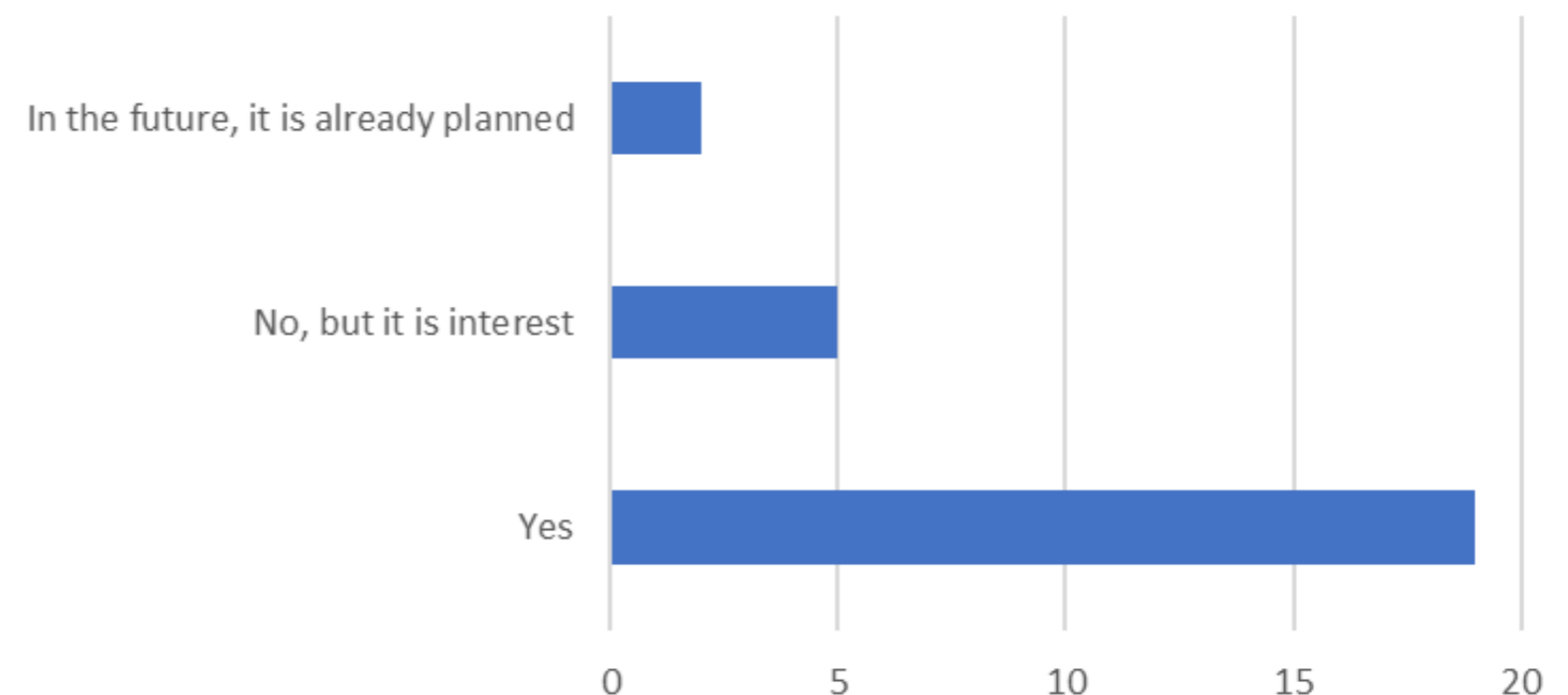
## Q52. How is the functionality of the search system enhanced?

## Search engine



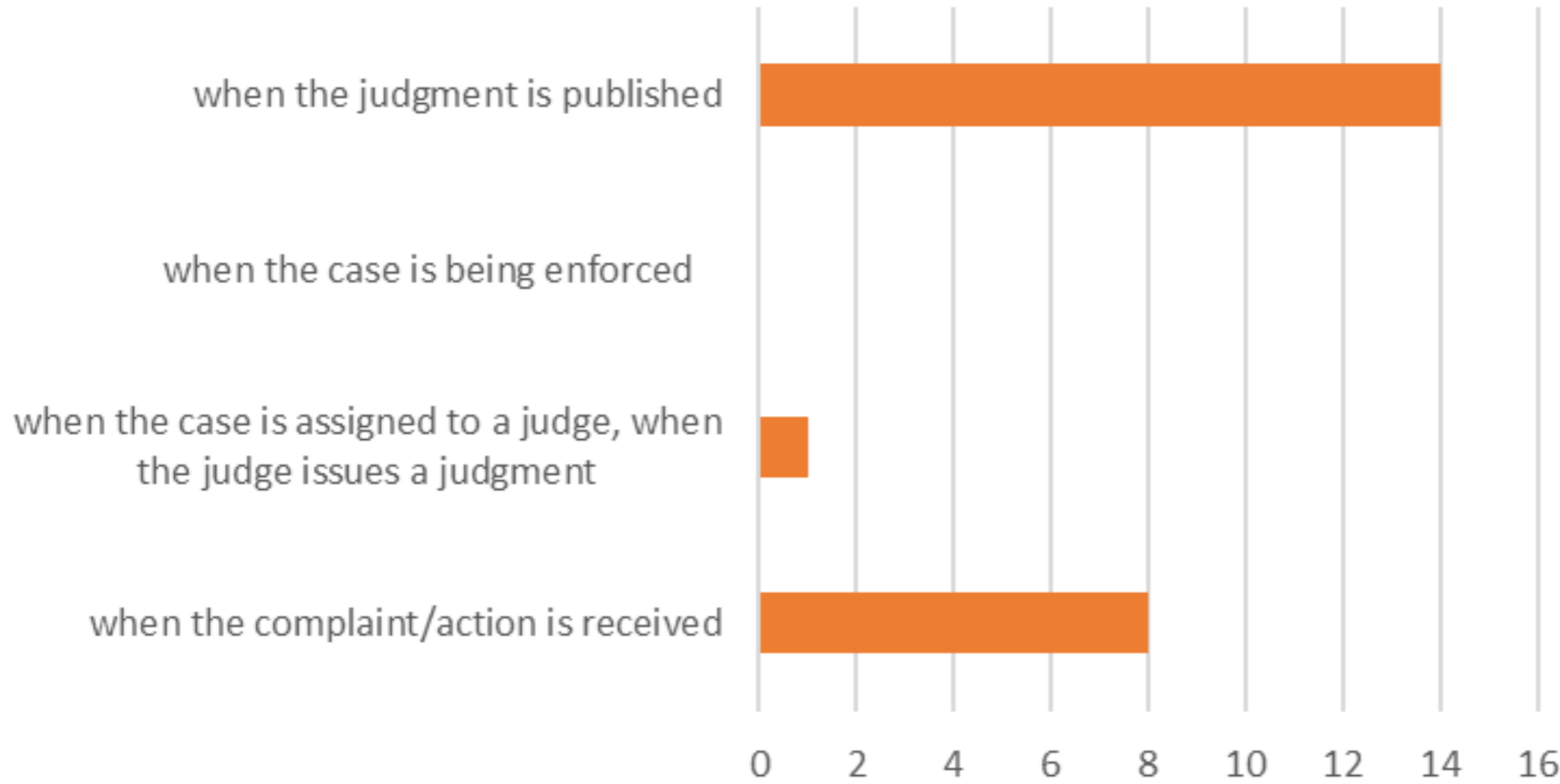
Connection with legislation,  
but not point-in-time with the  
appropriate version

## Q51. Is it possible to make search by article of legislation included in the court decisions?



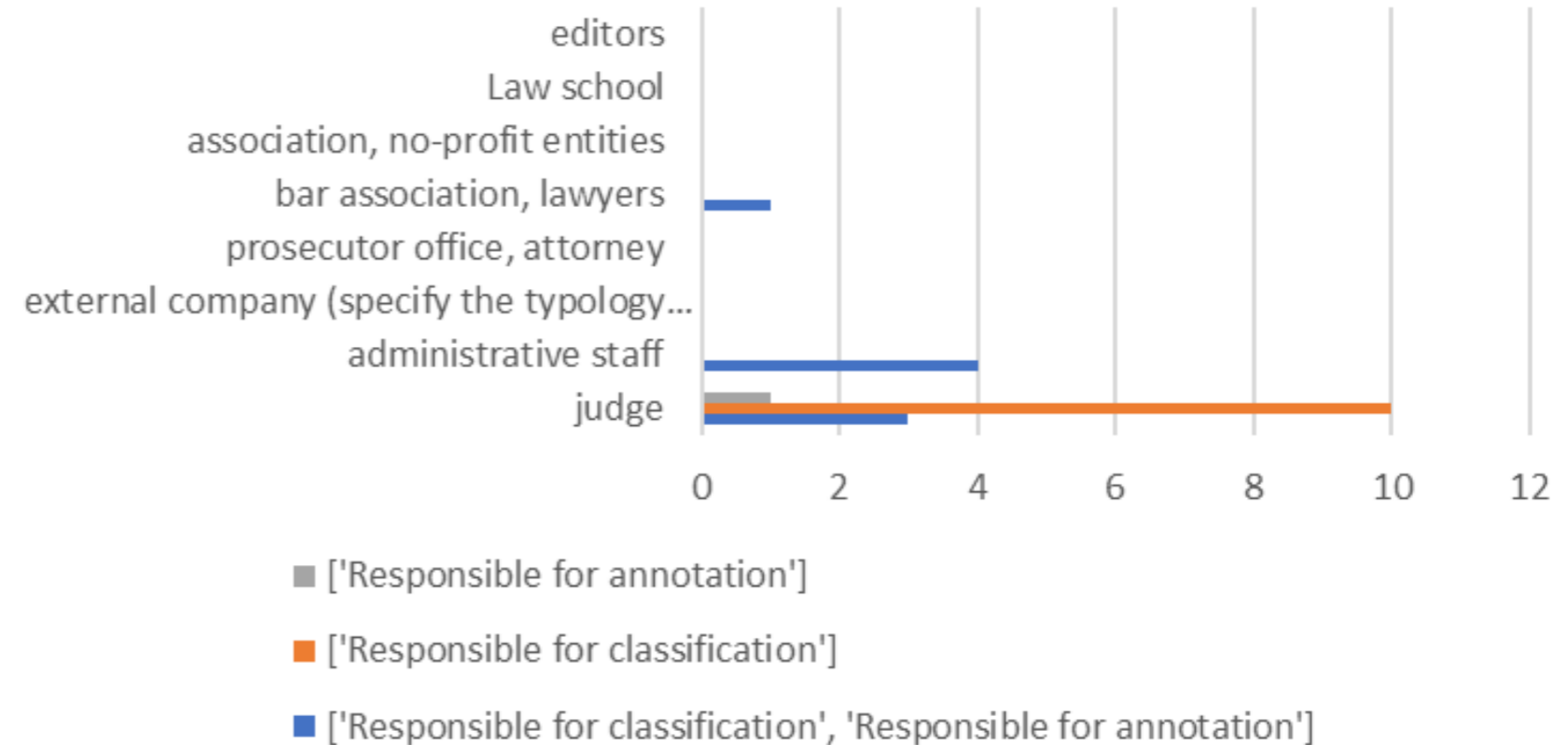
## Q69. When is the case classified?

## Classification

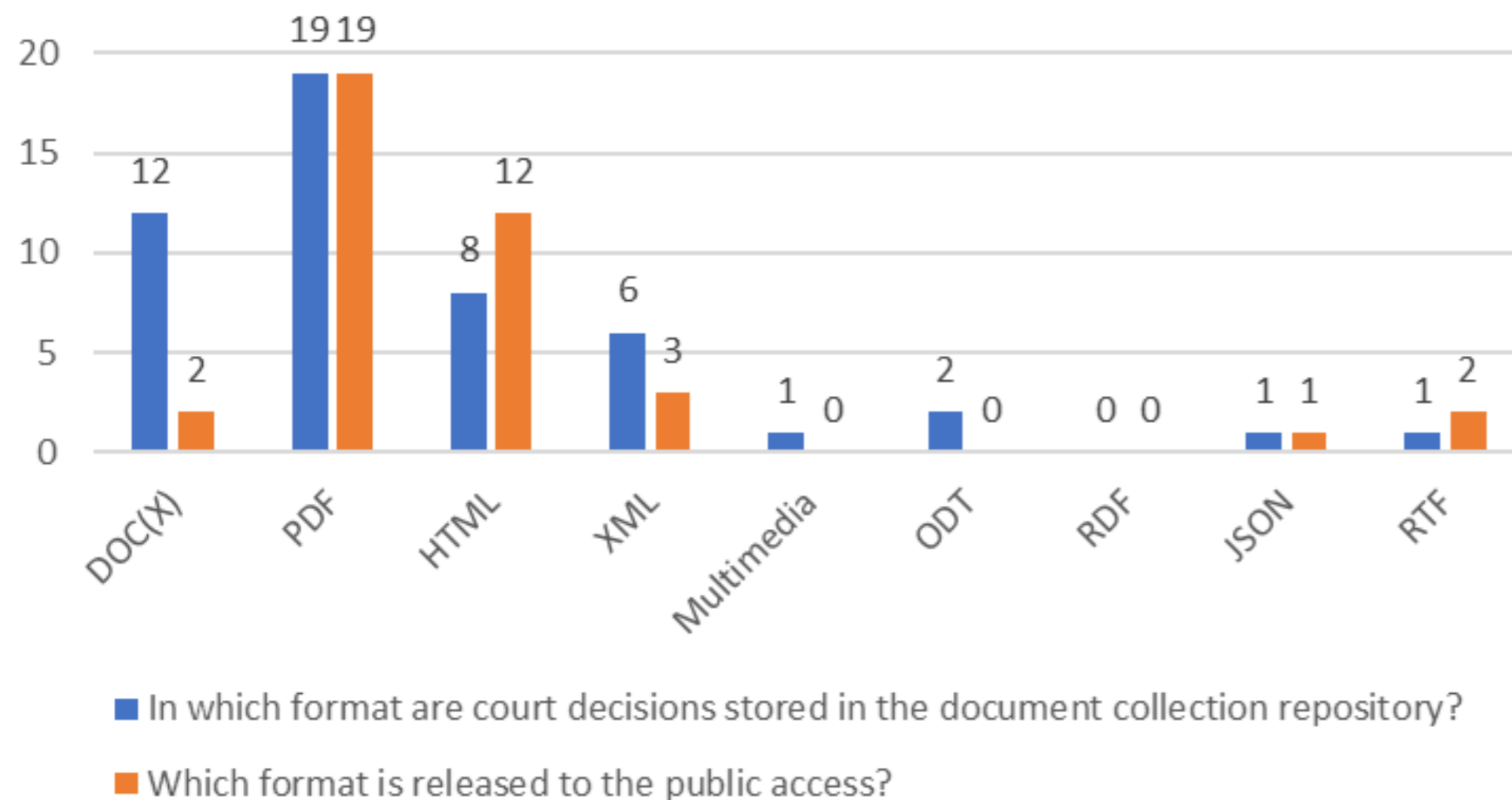


- Classification made by the judges
- During the publication

## Q70. Who is doing the classification?



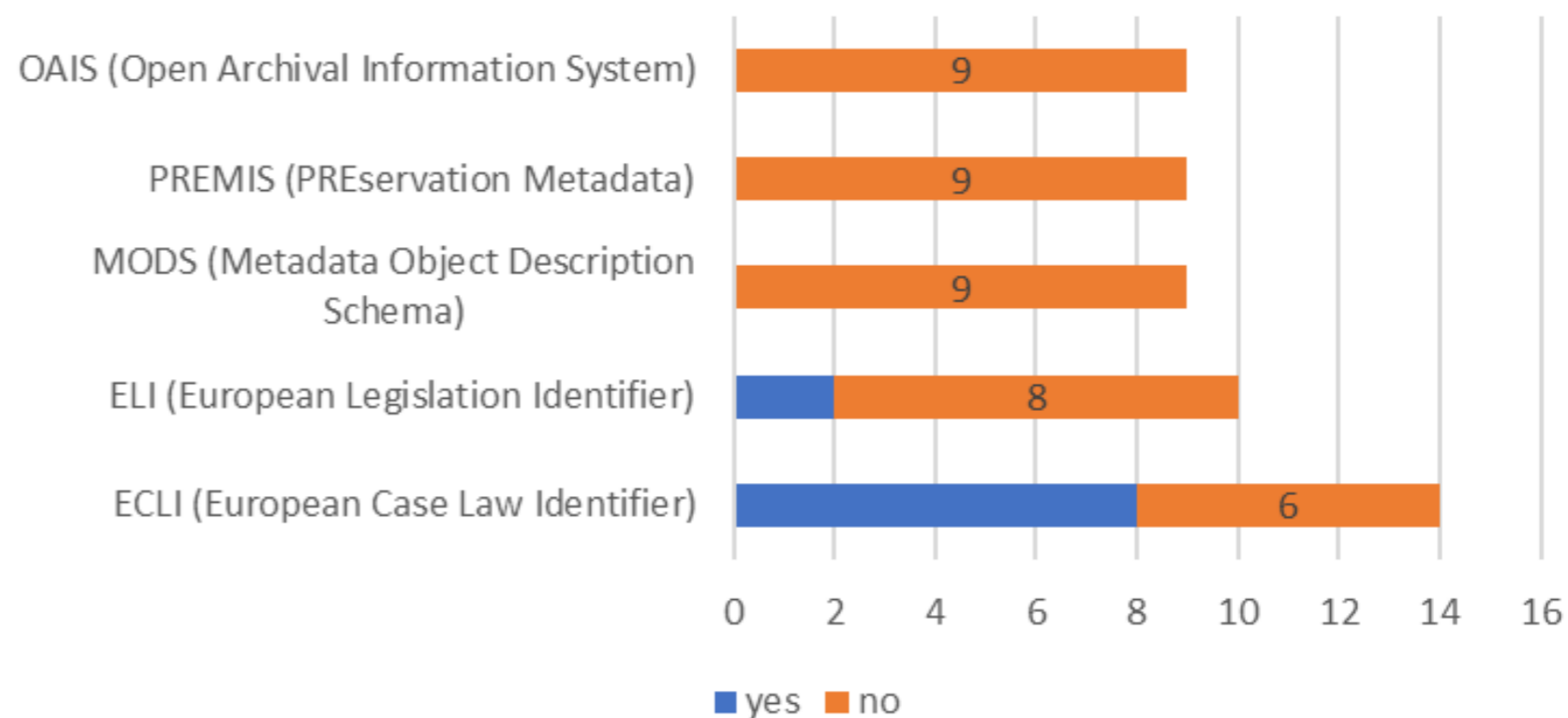
Q77 and Q78



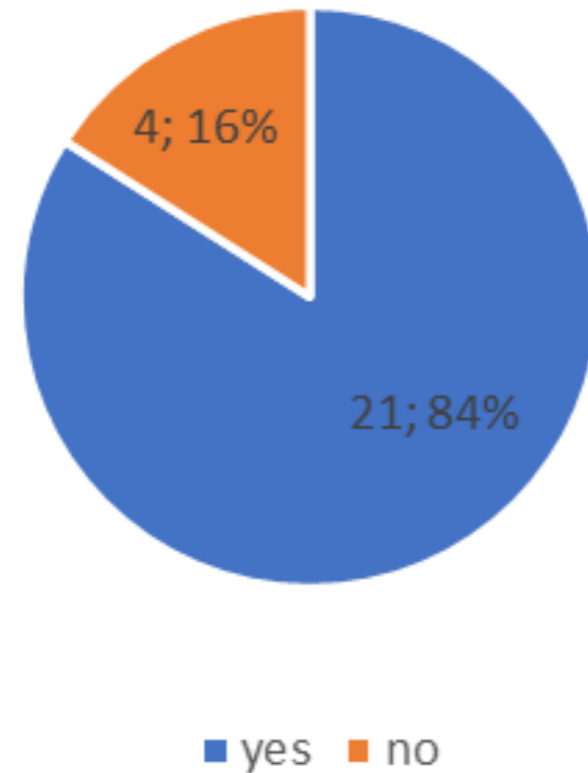
## Open Data Interoperability

- PDF is still the format used
- We should move to digital format machine-readable for improving search functionalities, open data, re-usability, long term preservation
- ECLI has be used but should be improved
- API and license are not frequently managed

Q80. Which standards are you using for modelling metadata for improving the searchability of the portal?



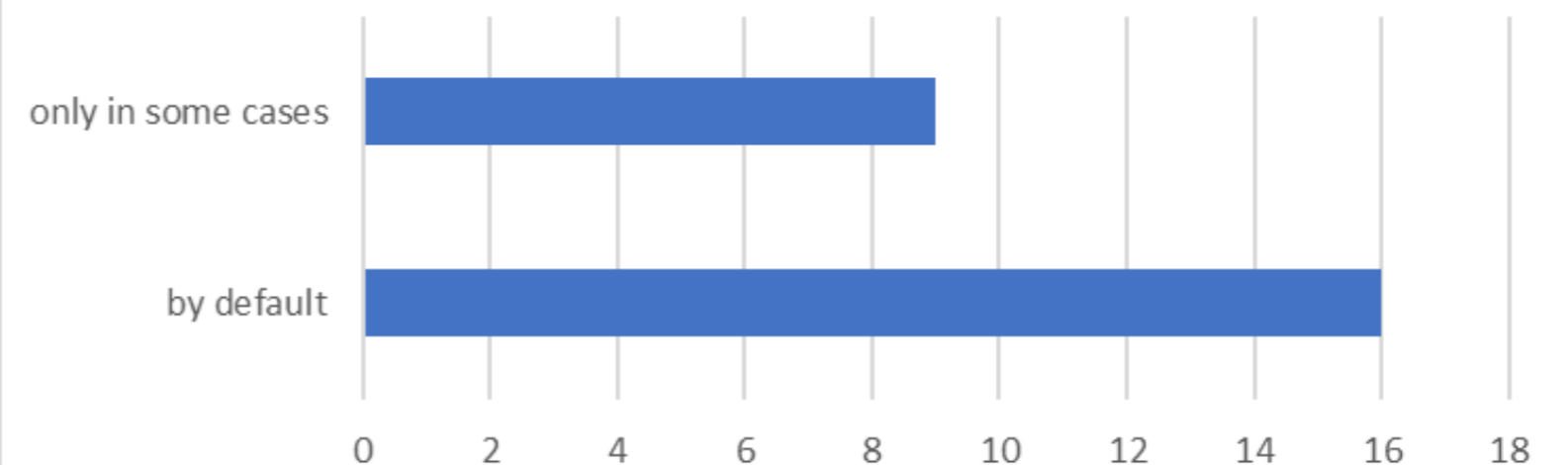
Q91. Is there a specific legal framework regarding anonymization (legal provisions whether or not decisions must be anonymized)?



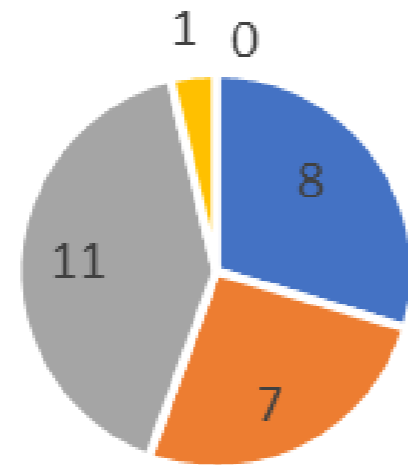
## Anonymization

- Anonymized By default
- By the judge/staff
- In the major of the courts
- Anonymized ex-post

Q93. Are decisions anonymized by default or only as an exception – on request of the data subject or by a decision of the judge ex officio or in certain specific types of cases (e.g. minors, cases where the public was excluded, etc.)?



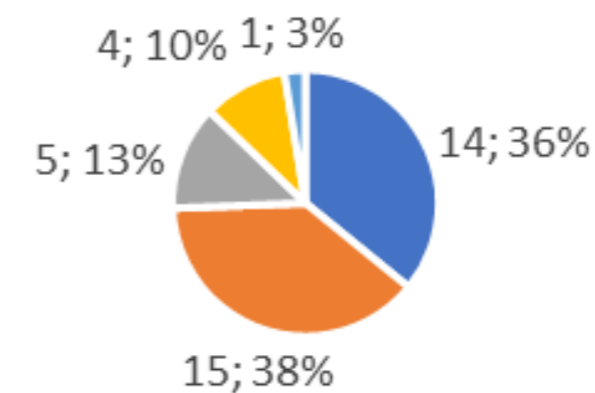
## Q112.How is anonymization achieved?



- Completely manual
- Manual with some software support
- Mainly automated with manual monitoring and correction
- Mainly automated
- While drafting the decision

## Anonymization

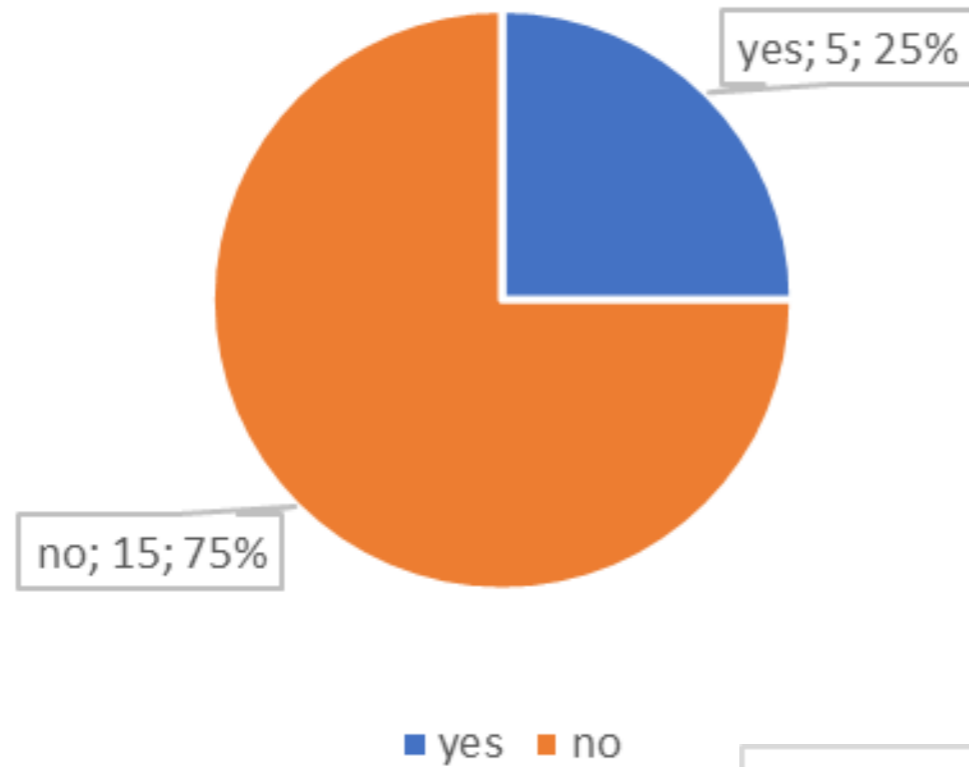
## Q110.How is anonymised (pseudonymised) data presented in the document?



- Deleting or blackening the personal data or by replacing them by dots
- Using initials, either by shortening names into initials or by choosing random initials
- Replacement by fake data
- Replacement by role
- Omissis

- With the support of ICT but manually supervised
- Removing/replacing data

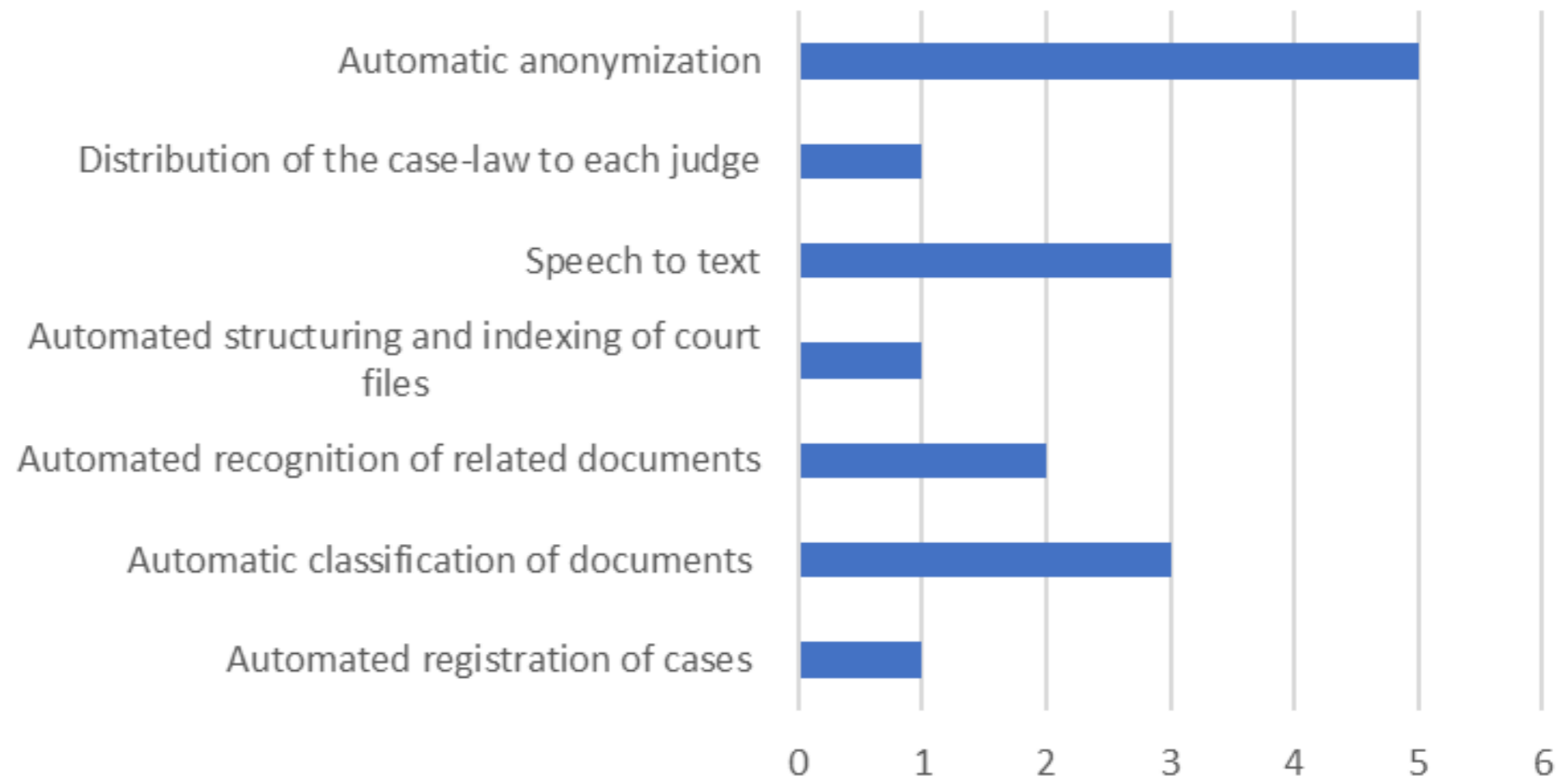
Q120. Do you use AI tools in the court decisions digitalization/publication



## Use of AI

AI is used in limited tasks, mostly for the anonymization and classification operations

Q122. Are AI tools used for which purpose?



**ANNEX IV: Checklist on the organisational framework for online publication of judicial decisions and access to legal knowledge**

	Tick (yes/no)	
<b>Governance</b>		
The Council for the Judiciary and/or judges must be involved in the publication policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publication covers the entire lifecycle (development, deployment, setting up the appropriate organisational structure, publication and maintenance).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interoperability with other judicial and legal information systems is envisaged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A precautionary approach with preventive policies and risk assessment is adopted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Binding rules apply to the publication of case law.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The necessary organisational structure is in place.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internal rules relating to the internal organisational structure and processes are applied.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooperation with other communities is envisaged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooperation with the legislative authorities is established and standards are harmonised and set.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Design and development</b>		

# Conclusions

1. There is an acceptable level of **consciousness** of the strategic goals and benefit to develop an accessible portal with **all** the case-law.
2. Reinforce the **organization** aspect with a specific **task-force** for managing the anonymization, classification, and accessibility **policies** in transparent way, especially regarding the filters in the search engine.
3. Avoid **fragmentation** in many different databases with a variety of criteria.
4. Support the **integration** between different levels of courts and with **CJEU, ECtHR**.
5. Define **Open Government Data policy** and plan, for releasing in **machine-readable format** the material and **metadata** (e.g., ECLI, AKN, ELI). This permits to opening of new scenarios for improving the searchability and the data analytics of the judiciary system.
6. Declare clear and accessible guidelines **explaining the methodology** concerning anonymization, classification, and search engine algorithms, especially if they use AI.