

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, le 17 novembre 2023

CDCJ(2023)20

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON LEGAL CO-OPERATION
(CDCJ)**

101st plenary meeting

15-17 November 2023, Strasbourg, Room 7

**COUNCIL OF EUROPE PLAN OF ACTION ON STRENGTHENING JUDICIAL
INDEPENDENCE AND IMPARTIALITY (SOFIA ACTION PLAN)**

**DETAILED WORKPLAN OF THE FIRST THEMATIC REVIEW
BY THE CDCJ FOCUSED ON THE CAREER AND TRAINING OF JUDGES**

(adopted by the CDCJ at its 101st plenary meeting, 15-17 November 2023)

**Detailed workplan for the first thematic review by the CDCJ
on the career and training of judges**

Step 1 – Collection and analysis of the information		
Activity	Timeline	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection of information from relevant Council of Europe bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Venice Commission: opinions and ad-hoc analysis for Partnership for Good Governance (PGG) and Horizontal Facility (HF) Programmes o CCJE o CEPEJ: European Judicial Systems Report, CEPEJ Study for the EU Justice Scoreboard, Justice Dashboards reports for Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan countries o GRECO: results of the monitoring of compliance with GRECO recommendations for each evaluated countries for 4th evaluation round for the prevention of corruption in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors o Co-operation projects other than the PGG or the HF programmes. 	January 2024 - June 2024	CDCJ Secretariat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying other sources of information, for example European Commission's annual Rule of Law reports, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, OSCE, etc. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preliminary analysis of the information collected as they become available for identifying the gaps in it, for the elaboration of the questionnaire. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elaboration of the draft questionnaire to cover the gaps in the information, for approval by the CDCJ at its 103rd plenary meeting. 	June 2024 - November 2024	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Circulation of the questionnaire to the CDCJ and CCJE and collection of information. 	November 2024 - March 2025	CDCJ members

Step 2 – Analysis of the information collected		
Activity	Timeline	Responsibility
- Analysis of the responses to the questionnaire	April 2025- September 2025	CDCJ Secretariat
- Preparation of the draft thematic review report		
- Circulation of the draft report to the CDCJ	September 2025	CDCJ
- Discussion and approval of the review report and proposals for possible follow-up action at the 105 th plenary meeting of the CDCJ	November 2025	
Step 3 – Follow-up action		
Activity	Timeline	Responsibility
- CDCJ decision-making, on the basis of the results of the thematic review report, on possible follow-up action, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a general recommendation calling for reviewing legal frameworks, rules and practice regarding the career and training of judges in the specific areas identified as problematic with a view to strengthening the independence of judges; ○ the promotion of Council of Europe standards and best practices coming out of the thematic review report so as to address the identified challenges to the independence of judges; ○ the re-examination of the relevant Council of Europe legal instruments and, if need be, their possible revision. 	November 2025	CDCJ members
- Implementation of the agreed follow-up action	January 2026 - January 2027 (from 3 months to one year, depending on the type of the activity to be implemented)	CDCJ Secretariat CDCJ members