



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Justice



Greek Chairmanship
Council of Europe
May – November 2020
Présidence de la Grèce
Conseil de l'Europe
Mai – Novembre 2020



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Athens, 9 November 2020

Conclusions by the Greek Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe at the Conference of Ministers of Justice on “Independence of Justice and the Rule of Law”

In light of the interventions in official and non official languages that took place during this Conference, I would like to highlight the following points:

- 1. We acknowledge that in order to overcome the pandemic crisis and defend our common democratic values, cooperation and mutual trust between the member States of the Council of Europe is essential.*
- 2. We recall that the independent and effective functioning of a justice system whose decisions are enforced is a precondition for the enjoyment of all rights and freedoms.*
- 3. We reiterate our belief that an independent and efficient judiciary also constitutes a key element of public trust in justice and in democratic institutions more broadly.*
- 4. We welcome the guidance set out in the Council of Europe’s legal and advisory instruments as a basis for member States’ laws and policies, including the Plan of Action on Strengthening judicial independence and impartiality. We encourage member States to avail themselves of the Council of Europe’s expertise and support in respect of the issues addressed in these standards and in the Plan of Action.*
- 5. We note that new challenges to the rule of law and to judicial independence require an even closer exchange of information and best practices between the member States of the Council of Europe.*
- 6. We consider that the judiciary cannot strengthen the rule of law on its own and that public authorities have a duty to protect human rights by adopting and implementing laws which protect the right to a fair trial and ensure effective access to justice for all.*
- 7. We express our will to support the improvement of the quality and efficiency of justice through the law-making process and by carrying out justice reforms that ensure full respect for all rights and obligations and for our shared principles and values.*



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8. *We agree that access to justice, as a core element of the principle of the rule of law, depends upon an independent and effective judiciary.*
9. *We commend the contribution of all groups of legal professionals to the efficient functioning of national justice systems*
10. *We recognize that digital justice and the allocation of more resources towards the public service of justice are some of the political actions which may improve the efficiency, professionalism and transparency of the justice sector. We consider that human rights should be an integral part of any solutions that link technology and justice.*
11. *We welcome and support the work developed within the Council of Europe's competent committees which cultivate a genuine dialogue between the member States about their efforts to further improve their justice systems and guarantee judicial independence.*

Thank you all for your presence in our Conference today and for your constructive contribution to our discussions.

Special thanks to the Secretary General, Ms Buric and all the officials at the Council of Europe for their kind support and the fruitful cooperation we had for the organization of this Conference.

I would like to wish good luck and success in the coming German Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers hoping that the next time we meet will not be virtually.