

Strasbourg, 1 December 2023

CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN JUDGES (CCJE)

24th plenary meeting

29 November – 1 December 2023

Room 11, Main Building (Palais)

Strasbourg

ABRIDGED MEETING REPORT

A. FOREWORD

1. The Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE) held its 24th plenary meeting on 29 November – 1 December 2023 in Strasbourg. It was chaired by Ms Anke Eilers (Germany), President of the CCJE. The agenda is appended to the present report.

B. ITEMS SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS FOR DECISION

2. The CCJE invited the Committee of Ministers:
 - a. to take note of the Opinion No. 26 (2023) entitled “Moving forward: the use of assistive technology in the judiciary” which will be forwarded to the competent authorities in member States while encouraging its translation into appropriate languages if need be, and to the relevant bodies of the Council of Europe, in order that they may take account of it in their work;
 - b. to take note of this report as a whole.

C. LIST OF ITEMS DISCUSSED AND DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CCJE

The CCJE

3. **adopted** its Opinion No. 26 (2023) entitled “Moving forward: the use of assistive technology in the judiciary”, subject to possible editorial amendments by its Bureau, which was entrusted with making any such amendments, if needed, and also ensuring consistency between the English and French versions;
4. **decided** to submit it to the Committee of Ministers to take note of it and to invite member States to ensure its dissemination as widely as possible among decision-makers and professionals of justice, including its translation where needed;
5. **adopted** the thematic study on lessons learnt as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and their effect on the administration of justice, subject to possible editorial amendments by the Secretariat, which was entrusted with making any such amendments, if needed, and also ensuring consistency between the English and French versions;
6. **welcomed** the 2023 Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on the State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Europe where the CCJE work and in particular the CCJE Opinion No. 24 (2021) on the evolution of Councils for the Judiciary and their role in independent and impartial judicial systems, and Opinion No. 25 (2022) on freedom of expression of judges were mentioned;
7. **underlined** that the CCJE continued its work in 2023 in line with the priorities of the Strategic Framework of the Council of Europe, in particular the priority No. 6 on independence, efficiency and resilience of the judicial systems in member States which is a cross-cutting priority for the CCJE mandate and activities;
8. **further noted** that Opinion No. 26 (2023) entitled “Moving forward: the use of assistive technology in the judiciary” also responded to the priority No. 6 of the Strategic Framework as it focused on the use of technology for enhancing the efficiency of judicial systems while safeguarding the independence of judges; **recalled** also that several other priorities of the Strategic Framework are also directly relevant for the CCJE mandate and work;
9. **took note** in this respect of the CCJE Terms of Reference for 2024-2027, and that they stress the continued role of the CCJE in developing and promoting key standards for judicial independence and impartiality;
10. **welcomed** the information provided by the CCJE President on her participation in the 10th Annual Meeting of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe with the Heads of Monitoring and Advisory Bodies, held in Strasbourg on 17 January 2023, where she underlined the importance of an independent judiciary in member States, and highlighted in particular the interdependence between democratic and legal culture, and the contribution of the CCJE to the development of legal culture;

11. **welcomed** also the information provided by the CCJE President on her exchange of views with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 27 September 2023, where she stressed several key Opinions of the CCJE and its important institutional role within the Council of Europe. The Ministers' Deputies welcomed the work of the CCJE as an invaluable contribution to the activities of the Organisation regarding the judiciary and in particular its independence and impartiality;
12. **took note** of the information provided by the CCJE members as regards the progressive reforms undertaken in their respective justice systems, as well as in the field of legislation on criminal and civil procedure, **welcomed** the increasing use of the CCJE standards in this process;
13. **took note** of the information provided by the Secretariat underlining the importance of the work of the CCJE in the global context of the Council of Europe, as reflected in the Secretary General's above-mentioned Report, and the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Reykjavík, Iceland, 16-17 May 2023), which stress the commitment of member States to ensuring the independence and impartiality of the judiciary;
14. **welcomed** the continued close co-operation between the CCJE and other bodies and institutions of the Council of Europe, and in particular with the Venice Commission, European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) and European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ); **noted** in this respect the continued use of the Venice Commission's standards in the CCJE Opinions and other documents, and also the use by the Venice Commission of the CCJE standards and recommendations; **noted** also the continued references to the CCJE Opinions by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in its judgments;
15. **recalled** also that it remains at the disposal of the Committee of Ministers and other bodies of the Council of Europe (particularly the Secretary General and the Parliamentary Assembly) and of the CCJE members and observers to prepare opinions and other texts concerning the specific situation of judges in any given member State;
16. **entrusted**, in this regard, the Bureau of the CCJE to prepare, adopt and publish such opinions and other texts concerning the specific situation of judges in any given member State;
17. **decided** to focus its 2024 Opinion on the disciplinary liability of judges, while keeping in mind the topics of diversity in judicial systems and the role of constitutional courts as prospective topics for future Opinions of the CCJE, and **instructed** its Bureau and the Working Group of 2024 to prepare draft Opinion on this topic for adoption at its 25th plenary meeting in 2024;
18. further **decided** to entrust the Bureau of the CCJE with the organisation of a thematic study of the CCJE on diversity in judicial systems, which may serve as groundwork and provide background information for a possible future Opinion with relevant standards and recommendations on this subject;
19. **elected** Leonie Reynolds (Ireland) as President, and José Igreja Matos (Portugal) as Vice-President for 2024; **thanked** Anke Eilers (Germany) and Leonie Reynolds

- (Ireland) for their outstanding work and contributions respectively as the CCJE President and Vice-President in 2023;
20. **elected** Canòlic Mingorance Cairat (Andorra) and Wiggo Storhaug Larssen (Norway) as members of the CCJE Bureau for 2024-2025; **thanked** Duro Sessa (Croatia) and Kim Lewison (United Kingdom) for their outstanding work and contributions as members of the CCJE Bureau in 2022-2023;
 21. **elected** Yvonne Summer and Markus Thoma (Austria), Duro Sessa (Croatia), Valéry Turcey (France), Anke Eilers (Germany), Valeria Piccone (Italy), Marc De Werd (Netherlands), Nina Betetto (Slovenia), Viktor Gorodovenko (Ukraine) and Kim Lewison (United Kingdom) as members of the Working Group responsible for preparing the 2024 draft Opinion to be submitted to the 25th plenary meeting of the CCJE, and Jasmina Ćosić Dedović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ketevan Tsintsadze (Georgia), Aida Popa (Romania), Björn Linden (Sweden) and Manuel Fernández-Lomana García (Spain) as substitute members;
 22. **designated** Mirjana Popović (Montenegro) as the Gender Equality Rapporteur for 2024;
 23. **decided** to hold its 25th plenary meeting in Strasbourg on 4-6 December 2024;
 24. **decided** to hold the 46th and 47th meetings of the Working Group on 3-5 April 2024 and 3-5 July 2024, respectively.