

METANI: THERE IS NOT A SINGLE CASE, NOR A SINGLE MAGISTRATE WHO DESERVED A DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDING BUT WAS NOT SUBJECTED TO

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The Assembly of Albania has addressed 8 recommendations for the year 2025, which relate to strengthening the effectiveness of inspections, monitoring the implementation of recommendations, interinstitutional cooperation, the digitalization of processes, the analysis of citizens' complaints, public communication, and the public assessment of the impact of inspection activities.



HIJ in numbers

Out of 269 cases reviewed, 128 decisions were rendered:

97 archiving decisions after initial review

31 archiving decisions after verification

43 verification decisions

The citizen at HIJ

During July 2026:

- Welcomed **38 complainants**, which were present personally at the premises of the Office of the High Inspector of Justice;
- Has had **22 phone calls** from citizens, who requested information on the stage of their complaints or Information on completing the complaint form;
- **13 requests** for information were received.



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SPEECH OF THE HIGH INSPECTOR OF JUSTICE, MR. ARTUR METANI, BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON CITIZENS' INITIATIVES, COOPERATION AND INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT



Thank you, mr. Xhafaj, for the floor.

The Assembly of Albania has addressed 8 recommendations for the year 2025, which relate to strengthening the effectiveness of inspections, monitoring the implementation of recommendations, interinstitutional cooperation, the digitalization of processes, the analysis of citizens' complaints, public communication, and the public assessment of the impact of inspection activities. In the assessment of the High Inspector of Justice, all 8 recommendations have been implemented. I had prepared something more general, but since those that were considered not to be implemented were addressed specifically, I would also like to address them specifically.

Recommendation 1. *Drafting a periodic reporting format for the implementation of inspection recommendations, with measurable indicators.* It has been fully fulfilled according to the HIJ, because it has approved the relevant order containing rules and procedures for reporting on the implementation of recommendations with quantitative and qualitative indicators, with the aim of guaranteeing the effectiveness of inspections.

Recommendation 2. *Including follow-up inspections as part of the annual inspection planning and providing the corresponding resources for their implementation.* This has also been fulfilled according both to the rapporteur and to the HIJ.

Recommendation 3. *Initiating an interinstitutional cooperation protocol with the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, and the Prosecutor General Office, in order to enable access to the electronic systems of the courts and prosecution offices.* In implementation of this recommendation, HIJ has continued its regular cooperation with both Councils and the Prosecutor General Office by providing data, clarifications, as well as representation in the working groups for the development of the new information systems. Within the framework of the EU4Digital Justice (EU4DJ) project, meetings have been held with UNOPS and the Prosecutor General Office to identify HIJ's needs regarding inspectors' access to the new case management system.

HIJ has been proactive, both in submitting requests for data and in participating in discussions on the technical solutions for access to the system. Upon the invitation of the High Judicial Council, representatives of the HIJ have participated in all technical meetings to determine the institution's needs for access to the court and prosecution office systems. Currently, the development of the electronic system or electronic systems is still in progress and the final technical architecture has not yet been consolidated. In this context, drafting a formal protocol would not have any added effect, as the HIJ's engagement has been ensured both in presenting its needs and, at the same time, the HIJ's access to the existing court systems, ARKID and ICMIS, where all inspectors and assistant inspectors have full access in accordance with the legal provisions, ensuring compliance with the principles of legality, transparency, and information security.

Recommendation 4. *To conduct consultations with the Chamber of Advocacy, with the aim of identifying issues within the justice system and addressing them through thematic inspections.* For the implementation of this recommendation, HIJ addressed the Chamber of Advocacy through letter no. 3286 prot., dated 14.11.2025, requesting proposals for inspection topics for the year 2026, in accordance with the practice followed with the other institutions of the justice system. Up to the time of reporting, no response has been received and no proposals or specific issues have been submitted by this institution. Under these circumstances, as far as the HIJ is concerned, the recommendation is considered implemented, not only for this reason, but also because, on an ongoing basis, all complaints submitted by citizens represented by lawyers have been addressed by the High Inspector of Justice, not only individually, but also in the drafting of the topics for institutional or specific thematic inspections. Furthermore, whenever there have been institutional referrals to the HIJ, such as those from the Chamber of Advocacy of Shkodër or the Chamber of Advocacy of Sarandë, HIJ has responded with concrete measures. In the case of the requests from the Chamber of Advocacy of Shkodër, the magistrate against whom a complaint had previously been filed was subjected to disciplinary proceedings,

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while in the case of Saranda, the requests submitted by the Chamber of Advocacy of Sarandë were subjected to a thematic inspection, which is still ongoing. Therefore, on this point, I believe that the relationship between the HIJ and the National Chamber of Advocacy has been entirely correct, institutional, and in full respect of the constitutional dignity of the institution.

Recommendation 5. *Taking measures for the establishment of a case management system for the HIJ, with the aim of digitalizing the processes of complaint review, verification, and investigation, in order to improve efficiency, reduce delays, and facilitate the real-time tracking of complaints.* Considered Implemented, also according to the rapporteur.

Recommendation 6. *Preparing periodic analytical reports on the subjects of citizens' complaints, with the aim of identifying the main trends of the issues.* The Thematic Inspection Plan for the year 2025, approved by the General Meeting of Inspectors, reflects the phenomena identified during the review of complaints submitted by citizens, legal entities, and the institutions provided for in Article 194, paragraph 2 of Law No. 115/2016, where the principal place is occupied by allegations relating to the protraction of court proceedings and delays in the reasoning of decisions by magistrates. For the purpose of formalizing this process and in implementation of the Assembly's recommendation, Order No. 148, dated 31.12.2025, has been approved, which determines the data that the analytical reports on the subjects of complaints must contain, as well as the frequency of their preparation. Therefore, the recommendation has been implemented.

The Thematic Inspection Plan for the year 2025, approved by the General Meeting of Inspectors, reflects the phenomena identified during the review of complaints submitted by citizens, legal entities, and the institutions provided for in Article 194, paragraph 2 of Law No. 115/2016, where the principal place is occupied by allegations relating to the protraction of court proceedings and delays in the reasoning of decisions by magistrates. For the purpose of formalizing this process and in implementation of the Assembly's recommendation, Order No. 148, dated 31.12.2025, has been approved, which determines the data that the analytical reports on the subjects of complaints must contain, as well as the frequency of their preparation. Therefore, the recommendation has been implemented.

Recommendation 7. *Expanding and strengthening institutional communication and awareness-raising activities through thematic campaigns and educational content tailored to the general public, aiming to increase awareness of citizens' rights and the role of the HIJ, improve citizen-institution interaction, and increase trust in accountability mechanisms within the justice system.* Within the framework of this recommendation, the Legal Education, Public Information and Awareness Program for Citizens for the period 2026–2027 has been drafted, which incorporates the obligations arising from the Resolution of the Assembly of Albania and was approved in January 2026, extending over a three-year period.



Following the adoption of the 2025 Resolution, several key activities have been carried out, including the organization by the High Inspector of Justice of an event on disciplinary inspection in Albania and the presentation of the publication “General History of the Disciplinary Process.” In addition, meetings have been held with high school students in Tirana and with participants of the Academy of European Integration and Negotiations (AIEN) on the module “The Rule of Law.” Meetings have also been held in nine-year schools in Përmet. On an ongoing basis, the HIJ's meetings with the public or with organized groups of society, such as schools outside Tirana, have been intensive. For us, the recommendation has been implemented. Not to mention the institution's official website, which is full of information and is one of the most transparent websites with regard to the activity and work of the HIJ.

Recommendation 8. *To prepare, by December 2025, the analysis, which the rapporteur also agreed has been implemented.* With regard to the recommendations proposed for 2026, naturally, we did not even have time to review them. I have seen, or rather the General Meeting of Inspectors has seen, the recommendations proposed by the Committee on Legal Affairs, with which we agreed. As for the proposals coming from this Committee, we need to review them once again in the General Meeting of Inspectors and, of course, respond to you in writing, and promptly. Two or three things that I managed to note down—one of them is a timetable for the recruitment of inspectors. Now, I understand that, undoubtedly, the issue of inspectors is a fundamental issue, because without inspectors it is not possible to implement the other 15 recommendations either, but the point is that, as far as the HIJ is concerned, we have taken every measure to ensure that the competition procedures for inspectors, both magistrate inspectors and non-magistrate inspectors, are conducted within short timeframes. The Councils announce vacancies almost, perhaps, twice a year for judges and prosecutors, and there are no applications. At this point, what kind of timetable could I propose, for example? Another thing I noted was improving the quality of responses so that they are not formal and that citizens receive a response to every allegation. I do not know why this concern has been raised, because this concern has not come to the HIJ. I would have liked something more concrete, because one of the things that our international partners actually criticize when they monitor our work is that the responses and disciplinary investigations are lengthy. So, perhaps these are the kinds of things that we also need to examine carefully. That is why I am saying that I need to discuss the recommendations you have proposed with the inspectors in their General Meeting, in accordance with what you, of course, believe should be done as for what can undoubtedly be accomplished within the six months remaining until the end of the year, naturally within the scope of our competencies and the issues that we encounter every day.

That is all I had to say on these two documents, Mr. Chairman.



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Q&A session with the HIJ before the Committee on Citizens' Initiatives, Institutional Cooperation and Oversight

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: As we said, Mr. Inspector, the MPs have the right to ask questions; you have the right to respond. We have set one minute as the rule, to be clear, for each of the questions. And at the end, after your remarks, only then may the MPs intervene. That means you are free to continue answering, but at the very end they may make a comment regarding the answers received. This is the methodology we have applied throughout this process. Yes, Mr. Hasalla, you have the floor, please.

MP Saimir Hasalla: Yes. I have grouped my questions into three sets, let's say, concerning the growth in the stock of complaints and the real capacity to handle them. What are the concrete reasons why, during 2025, the HIJ handled fewer complaints than the number of new complaints filed? How many complaints have been pending for more than 1, 2, or 3 years? And what is the average time for handling a complaint? Regarding inspector vacancies and the impact on performance: how many recruitment or secondment procedures have been carried out, and why have they not led to the staffing structure being filled? And second, what measures are required from the HJC and the HPC for the secondment of magistrates? And one more thing: regarding the justice reform, this reform was not carried out specifically to protect judges or prosecutors, but to make them more accountable before the law and before citizens. In the law, in the law on the HIJ as well, the article, specifically Article 194, point 3, states: "The HIJ investigates suspected violations, mainly based on public data or data obtained in the context of institutional and thematic inspections, according to the conditions and procedures set out in the law on the status of judges and prosecutors in the Republic of Albania." In the context of this article, my question is: how many of the investigations into violations has the HIJ initiated mainly on this basis, under this article? That was all I had. Thank you.

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: Thank you, Mr. Hasalla. Mr. Metani, you have the floor for the answers.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: My apologies, I didn't turn on my microphone. So, there is no application at all from judges. This is as far as judges are concerned, for magistrate inspectors. As for non-magistrate inspectors, four calls for applications have been made. In three of the calls, there are processes that are taking longer, because it is a vetting process carried out during recruitment, and it does not depend on the HIJ's work, it depends on the response of other institutions.

MP Saimir Hasalla: Have they been closed? Is the fourth one in progress?

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: In three of the calls, the verifications have been carried out, and the fourth is in progress. In the first two calls, a number of inspectors were recruited; in the third, none were recruited because the candidates were not found to meet the criteria set out by law, or the professional assessment made by the Justice Inspectorial Commission regarding the candidacies. We are waiting for the announcement to be closed by the High Judicial Council, but I do not believe there will be applications from judges. In fairness, I also link this to the matter of the law. Five years ago I already asked that the relationship between the law and the matter of employing, or seconding, inspectors to the High Inspector of Justice should at the very least be the subject of debate, because we had requested legal amendments, I have said this several times, including in the Law Committee, when we gave our reports. I understand there has been a discussion, because what is being asked for is a systemic change and it is not simply a matter of lowering the criteria for magistrates who would be seconded or would apply to be inspectors at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice. But in any case, it is a concern that the Office of the HIJ has, or had, in the proposals we sent before the legal amendments were made. Being multi-dimensional, they were not all approved in the Assembly; some of them were approved. Let's see whether these changes have been effective, but the first call showed that there has not been increased interest from judge-magistrates in the position of inspector at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice.

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Second, regarding the fact whether or not it is related to the complaints, no, then, regarding the complaints. Regarding, there were three questions, on fewer complaints. On average, the same number have been handled as last year, if not more. Secondly, rather, the number of thematic inspections has increased, and taking this ratio into account, and assessing it also against the number of inspectors at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, I think this is the assessment that should be made of the figures. Third, the number of complaints increases a great deal in certain periods. I don't know why. It happens that over a quarter, the number of complaints reaching the Office of the High Inspector of Justice almost doubles. So, speaking in figures, in 2024 we handled 1,374, while in 2025 we handled 1,635. So the number of complaints handled by the Office of the High Inspector of Justice has increased, and this is my assessment of this ratio between incoming complaints and those handled. It is difficult to measure the time it takes to handle a complaint, because it depends on many factors: the complexity of the case, the number of magistrates against whom the citizen or institution is complaining, and the stage the case is at when the citizen files the complaint. So it is difficult to give a... it can range from a day to a week, depending also on the response we receive from institutions regarding the verification of the complaints we carry out. I do want to point out here that a major convenience for the rapid verification of complaints has been the access to the system, that is, following the Assembly's recommendation for HIJ access to the courts' system. This greatly speeds up obtaining information, and there is no longer a need for written requests; we get it directly from the system, and so we are able to respond to citizens' complaints more quickly, and the next question, again linked to the complaints... The number of complaints, at the moment I was elected High Inspector of Justice – that is, on 1 February 2020, when the institution was established, inherited from the other institutions was around 2,200 complaints. By the end of the first year it reached 3,300 or 3,400, while at work there was only the High Inspector of Justice and one other inspector. And for this reason, when the other inspectors who were seconded arrived, the prosecutor-inspectors, the need arose to approve a methodology for handling the backlog of complaints and those that were coming in. The methodology was approved, giving priority to the timing and nature of the case, and so on, and after this methodology and after the work done, the backlog was also cleared within a good time, and now we are handling, I believe in September we will begin handling the complaints from 2025 – that is, 2023 and 2024 are being finished; I am confident even by July, but I don't want to say that; so in September we will begin handling the complaints from 2025 and 2026. Regarding investigations, how many investigations have been opened, how many were opened on our own initiative? Well, for 2025, two were opened on the initiative of the High Inspector of Justice. Two. I want to point out one thing here: that this is one of the issues we consider most delicate for the Office of the High Inspector of Justice; not individually, but institutionally – because we must maintain a fair balance between what is reported in the media and what may actually constitute a disciplinary violation by a magistrate, and what may actually constitute activity of the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, and of course the balance with the independence of magistrates, because naturally this institution was not designed or conceived to protect the independence of judges, perhaps as your words suggested, but the Office of the High Inspector of Justice has, over six years, rigorously respected the constitutional and legal protocol regarding the accountability and responsibility of magistrates, in relation to their independence.

There is not a single case, neither among the proceedings carried out nor among the complaints handled, in which the High Prosecutorial Council, the High Judicial Council, the Special Appeal Chamber, or, in those cases where it has been involved, the European Court of Human Rights, has returned an act or a decision to the High Inspector of Justice as incomplete, unprofessional, or not in compliance with the law. These were the answers to the questions.

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: Yes, do you have time? Yes.

MP Saimir Hasalla: When I spoke, I did not mean the HIJ specifically alone, I meant the justice reform as a whole, in general. And regarding that, I described it as having been done to make prosecutors and judges more accountable, first and foremost before the law, but also before citizens. That was all I had. Thank you.

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: Thank you. I am confident that the High Inspector is also aware of the extraordinary role he has in this respect. So, I believe you both share the same view; that the High Inspector, the High Inspectorate of Justice, was created precisely to serve the other side of the coin of accountability, while protecting and respecting their independence, of course.

MP Saimir Hasalla: Yes.

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: No, no, there's no need. It isn't a question.

MP Saimir Hasalla: No, this is a comment.

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: No, don't make a comment. You can make your comment at the end. Yes, Mr. Gjoni?

MP Gjin Gjoni: Thank you, Mr. Xhafaj. Thank you, Mr. High Inspector. My questions relate to what the European Commission has normally identified. The problems of vacancies and lack of capacity persist. Strengthening of the integrity and inspection mechanism is needed, and an increase in the efficiency of disciplinary procedures is called for. These are three of the findings that normally exist. In relation to this, I have a few questions concerning: the record volume of complaints versus human capacity. And in this specific case, it turns out that we are facing a large influx of complaints from citizens; 3,200 complaints handled for review, and a limited number of inspectors, for which, in this specific case, you gave an explanation that in the case of magistrate-inspectors it is very difficult, and in the case of non-magistrates there are no applications, even though you issued the announcement.

MP Saimir Hasalla: There have been applications.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: There have been, but they do not meet the criteria. Some of them, to be...

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: Let's finish with the questions. As for the questions, you will answer at the end.

MP Gjin Gjoni: And my question is: apart from the legislative changes, do you, as High Inspector of Justice, have any other mechanism to make it more attractive for these people to get involved, and to reduce the number of complaints?

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Second is the large gap between complaints and disciplinary proceedings. And this is another point that is commonly encountered. And I understand that you have archived 1,200 complaints because they concern the merits of the case, which is not within your competence, as that falls to the higher courts. But of the other complaints, which are individual complaints, in every instance, what are the problems we encounter most often? Is it most often the protraction of trials, the delayed reasoning of a court decision, or is it matters of ethics and professional integrity? The next question concerns resistance to, or rejection of, requests by the HJC and the HPC, which is a problem that is encountered. In this specific case, shouldn't the work and the way the High Inspector or the responsible inspectors operate be improved, to increase the efficiency and the manner of procedural investigation, or the other steps, so that requests become acceptable to the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council? And regarding the cases of disputes that have become public at the Inspectorate, excuse me, at the High Prosecutorial Council — is there room for the High Inspector of Justice to open a disciplinary investigation in that specific case? Because these are events which, normally, and up to the present moment, over a six-year period, we have not seen even a single member of the High Judicial Council or the High Prosecutorial Council brought before such an inspection. And the last question concerns thematic inspections. Have you carried out thematic inspections regarding the courts' stance on criminal offences of corruption, money laundering, and matters that have an effect on public trust in justice, which are the most sensitive issues today? And do we have cases of disciplinary proceedings being brought against judges who endlessly drag out the adjudication of cases and the reasoning of their decisions, which I believe is one of the very great cancers today in the matter of the backlog and of the reasoning of decisions in the justice system? And the last question: have we lost any procedural deadlines because of the protraction of complaints? Because there is a procedural deadline. When it starts, when it ends, and how it proceeds, so that it does not become time-barred. Thank you.

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: Yes, thank you, Mr. Gjoni. Mr. Inspector, your answers please; one minute for each of our colleague's questions.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Well, starting from the last question: there are no procedural deadlines being missed with regard to disciplinary investigations and disciplinary proceedings, in no case. Regarding the first question: there is no other mechanism by which the low number could influence the number of complaints. The mechanism we have found is, first, a methodology to shorten the timeframes within which complaints are handled; such as this access to the system, for example — or repeated complaints, or matters that have nothing to do with the work of the High Inspector of Justice, that is, matters that perhaps fall to other bodies, or matters that are in ongoing judicial proceedings. And I think it has worked, because the very increase in the number of complaints handled, from around 1,300-something to around 1,600-something, undoubtedly shows greater work by the inspectors, limited in number as you said, and this is also accompanied by an increase in the number of thematic inspections. And I believe we agree that thematic inspection is excellent work. And this is excellent work carried out by the inspectors, both on the basis of the findings the inspection produces and on the basis of the recommendations it makes, in order to address the problems the justice system has, in a systemic way.

And I think this is one of the greatest efforts brought by the group of prosecutor and non-magistrate inspectors of the Office of the High Inspector of Justice. Regarding the gap between disciplinary proceedings and the number of complaints — that is, the high number of complaints, perhaps seen this way from the outside, I too would agree with you, but I hold a different view, to tell the truth. First, the accountability system for magistrates has two major components. The first is the system of answerability, and the second is the system of responsibility. The system of answerability concerns appointment, or entry into the School of Magistrates, appointment by the councils, training by the School of Magistrates, promotion, ethical-professional evaluation by the councils, the promotion of judges according to criteria, of prosecutors according to criteria, the internal reporting within the system — that is, the role that the High Court has and must play in unifying judicial practice, the role of international jurisprudence in unifying the standards that the judiciary, the judicial power, and Albania's justice system must have — and then, of course, these are accompanied by asset verification, or the other background checks carried out by other institutions. After that comes the system of responsibility. The system of responsibility, which comprises: first, criminal liability; second, civil liability in the cases it provides for; and third, disciplinary liability. So, I think the entire system has to function, and it cannot be demanded of the system, or of certain bodies, that the last link function without all the links before it functioning. Because this turns the system into exhaustion and overstrain, not only a major one, but, ultimately, one with an unconstitutional effect too, because disciplinary proceedings cannot solve the troubles the system has today, or disciplinary proceedings alone. It is a complex of factors. That's the first point. Second, a disciplinary investigation is not a matter of emotions. That is, it does not depend on the emotion of the High Inspector of Justice, or of the responsible inspector who has handled the case. It depends on the criteria set out by law, and on the standards also set by the Councils, in the reports we have submitted when we have brought proceedings against magistrates. The handling, the very handling of the 1,600-odd complaints shows...

MP Gjin Gjoni: 1,200 are reasoned.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Yes, yes, all of them, if you'd like. The point is, this isn't the discussion. The discussion is...

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: Mr. Inspector, I believe you should answer our colleague in an ethical manner.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Forgive me if...

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: This isn't a matter of "if you'd like." This isn't...

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: It was simply a manner of speaking...

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: No, no. Well, fine, agreed. You will need to watch your manner of speaking. Just as we are careful with you.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Well, I have never questioned it, but neither has anyone ever questioned my ethics... OK. 1,650 complaints have been handled.

That means 1,650 case files have been handled. They have been taken up with the courts and prosecution offices. 1,650 decisions have been issued, which have reached the hands of the complainant, but also of the magistrate, who has had the complaint and the position of the High Inspector of Justice explained to him in accordance with the law. Which means the magistrate, every magistrate among these 1,600-odd who were reviewed, has felt that the accountability system toward them works. And not necessarily through a disciplinary investigation or disciplinary proceeding. This, in my view, is more important: that judges feel that the system which monitors their work in a constitutional manner functions at its best. There is not a single case that has come before the Office of the High Inspector of Justice in which someone has escaped disciplinary responsibility when they deserved it. Not a single case. This is verified, or also supported, by the complaints citizens have made against the rulings of the High Inspector of Justice, which have gone to the relevant Council. And in no case have the Councils ruled that the rulings of the High Inspector of Justice were incomplete in the investigation carried out, or in the verification carried out, or unprofessional. And for me, this is the standard I would personally judge by. Resistance from the Councils in relation to the proceedings carried out. To tell the truth, we undoubtedly discuss with the inspectors every decision taken by the Councils, in the sense of identifying a standard that we may not have assessed correctly. In no case have we assessed any shortcoming in our own work, and we base this not only on the analysis we carry out on ourselves, but also on the fact that all the disciplinary proceedings that the High Inspector of Justice has sent to the Councils have been subjected to a review by inspectors of the Spanish High Judicial Council. And the report they produced is on file. And of all the disciplinary reports we have sent to the Council, according to the assessment of these inspectors from outside Albanian institutions, there have been only two remarks concerning the High Inspector of Justice. The first, that the disciplinary investigation report, that is, the request for proceedings, is too long. And the second concerns a measure that the High Inspector of Justice requests, for the reduction of salary. According to the Spanish inspectors, this is a measure that perhaps affects not only the judges but also affects the judges' families. So on this point, the inspector should be more careful in seeking this measure. And third, in no case, when the Councils have rejected a request from the High Inspector of Justice, has it been sent back to the High Inspector of Justice on the grounds that the investigation was incomplete. It is a matter of assessment and discretion by the Councils in relation to the measure generally, and not in relation to the findings made by the High Inspector of Justice, or the investigation carried out by the High Inspector of Justice.

MP Gjin Gjoni: *About the corruption inspection in...!*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: The thematic inspection regarding corruption, or money laundering? I may have said this in other reports as well, in the other committee, last year too. But the way we draw up our inspections, the calendar of thematic inspections, is as follows. First, we do an analysis of all incoming complaints. That is, we compile a summary of what citizens complain about most, so as to address it also through thematic inspections. Second, we seek the opinion of justice institutions, such as the Councils, the Prosecutor General, and the Minister of Justice.

Not in every case have the institutions responded, but in any case, in the cases where they have responded, we have generally made it part of the inspection calendar, of course also balancing it against requests coming from other institutions, and against the number of inspectors we have, with the resources we have, so as to carry out a number of inspections that we can complete on time. Up to now, the number of thematic inspections has been increasing. Each year we started with 5 or 6; today we have 9 thematic inspections, which we hope to complete by the end of the year.

MP Gjin Gjoni: *What are the proceedings for?*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: As for the request for... that specific request you asked about has not been part of any proposal received, either from the institutions we consulted for their opinion, or as a phenomenon arising from citizens' complaints. As I said, citizens generally complain about the protraction of judicial proceedings, the delayed issuing of the reasoned decision, and unjust rulings. There have also been ethics matters, and we have intervened there, or conflict-of-interest matters, and so on. So there has not been a phenomenon that we would need to address arising from complaints about corruption or money-laundering matters.

MP Gjin Gjoni: *You mentioned protraction?*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Yes, proceedings for protraction, yes. We have also carried out thematic inspections that have also resulted in disciplinary proceedings, but also individual inspections, that is, of citizens' complaints, which have undoubtedly also led to disciplinary proceedings. For repeated delays, we have brought 5 cases. For unjustified or repeated failures to perform duties during adjudication, there are 4 cases. For acts or omissions committed by a magistrate that bring about unjust benefits or damages for the parties in judicial proceedings, there are 3 cases. And so on. But for repeated delays, we have proposed severe measures indeed, even last year we proposed severe measures. The Council did not find the proposal made by the High Inspector of Justice appropriate, in two cases we brought for protraction, or for the delayed issuing of the reasoning of court decisions. Nevertheless, this is a matter for the Council's assessment, in relation to... the message that the institutions must jointly send, in relation to citizens, or to citizens and prosecutors. But this is a matter of discretion, and it is not a matter that can be subject to any further assessment on our part.

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: *Excuse me. Yes, Mr. Gjoni, you have the right to comment on the answers to the questions...!*

MP Gjin Gjoni: *Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. High Inspector of Justice. Starting from the constitutional framework, today you are the institution which is the nerve center of the justice system. And normally, today you are the strongest institution that Albania's justice system should have today, at least according to the constitutional framework. And all the other institutions, starting with the High Council of Justice, the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, and the other institutions, normally including the special courts and SPAK as well, should today be subject to even greater oversight on the part of the inspector. All the answers you have given me, up to this present moment, were answers more or less of a theoretical character, a legal and constitutional explanation.*

And as for the matters that go to the heart of the problem, it is not that they were touched upon, for a very simple reason: today, to shorten by 15 days the adjudication deadline for a case from the Court of First Instance up to the High Court, I believe, is a problem that relates to the public's perception of trust in the justice system. And this is one of the main elements. The matters relating to the failure to give reasons for a decision; because Mr. Xhafaj has been Minister of Justice, and I have been a judge and a member of the High Council of Justice, there was no judge who could avoid it: if the reasoning of a decision took longer than 6 months, that judge would be sent for dismissal. And today you have judges who take even 1 year, even 1 year and more, and when the problem arises, today they remain in the system. And this creates this perception among people. Because I agree that on matters that go to the substance of the adjudication, it is not within your competence. But procedural matters, matters concerning the way the backlog drags on, which is one of the main problems and at the meeting we also had with the High Judicial Council and with the High Prosecutorial Council, one of the main points raised there; and Mr. Xhafaj rightly said that the issue for the European Union will be the issue of the protraction and the volume of the heavy caseload and the delays; which today the European Court of Justice will impose very heavy penalties in relation to the citizens who will have complaints. Another matter, regarding this verification by the Spanish inspector you mentioned to me, on what basis do you have it? Do you have any agreement, do you have any legal framework, do you have any mechanism, whereby you, before sending cases to the High Inspectorate of... excuse me, to the Council?

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Yes.

MP Gjini Gjoni: *Because it seems to me, under what legal framework do you receive this from an institution of another country, when you have no regulation for this? You simply have...!*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: No, no, no.

MP Gjini Gjoni: *No, because it seems a bit little to have only 5 proceedings, and what matters most is that up to the present moment you have not given an answer regarding the members of the High Judicial Council, the members of the High Prosecutorial Council, in relation to inspections. Or regarding topics that concern the way they conduct themselves in relation to... Thank you.*

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: *Thank you, Mr. Gjoni. Do you have a clarification as to why a misunderstanding arose regarding this matter of the Spanish Inspectorate?*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Yes, thank you, Chairman. A misunderstanding, since it could have been a normal question and not a comment. In any case, there is a project between the Albanian Government and the European Union, a support project for the justice system, called "EU4Justice." And this project, and this exchange of information, has been carried out within the framework of this project. So there is no agreement of the HIJ to send data back and forth, or to obtain confirmations from others, bypassing the confirmation of Albanian institutions. I said this as a professional argument. Second, I did not at any point speak in theory, I spoke to the standard. When you were a judge, it was a different situation, and now it is a different situation. And the assessment the HIJ must make is to gauge the workload judges have, not solely through their own fault, but also through negligence. And that is what we are doing.

We have sent magistrates forward for dismissal to the Councils, and the Councils have not found the proposal made by the High Inspector of Justice to be well-founded. And I think this is something we need to discuss. (Interruption without microphone.) One second, just a second, please, let me finish. Regarding the ethical breach that occurred at the HPC meeting, which happened once, as I saw in the media; every matter that falls within the jurisdiction, or within the powers, of the High Inspector of Justice, we follow closely. And naturally we intervene when we judge that it is the role of the High Inspector of Justice to intervene in the work of another constitutional body, including on a matter of ethics. Of course, it should be said in parenthesis here that there has been no complaint from any member of the High Prosecutorial Council concerning ethics matters within the Council. And I think that accountability begins here, first and foremost, but this is an individual matter, it is personal. And this is, in the end, a matter of discretion. After consulting with the inspectors, at the general meeting of inspectors, in accordance with the law, we assessed when it is necessary to intervene and when it is not. We intervened over an ethical breach in one case involving a member of the High Prosecutorial Council, and we referred it for disciplinary measures to the responsible body, and we are awaiting a response on the progress of securing the procedure. That was it.

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: *Thank you. Any other questions? Are there other questions from colleagues? OK, I have a few questions. The first question is: How many of the inspections and disciplinary proceedings initiated by you reflect the findings of rulings by the High Court, the Constitutional Court, and the European Court of Human Rights regarding rulings that found open violations of the law, or professional incompetence on the part of prosecutors and judges? Some examples have even become public in the media, and these are flagrant violations. Is there a final ruling regarding them? To what extent have these served as leads for your inspections? Do you have concrete examples? Also, there are several unifying decisions of the High Court, of the Constitutional Court, and several rulings of the European Court of Human Rights, or, if you wish, including here also the general instructions that are not applied by prosecutors or judges, and their decisions are repeatedly overturned for this reason, which is not simply a misunderstanding, nor solely a matter of the independence of prosecutors and judges, but a misapplication of the law, whether intentional or not, and naturally also evident professional incompetence. Some examples of this nature were also presented here today by the Prosecutor General in his submission. The next thing I have relates to the efficiency and quality of the HIJ's decision-making. What percentage do the inspectors and assistant inspectors who deal directly with inspection make up within your staffing structure? Since I have seen that you have also given a historical overview of inspection in Albania, how comparable is this to the Inspectorate that the Ministry of Justice used to have? And in my view, you have a staff several times larger than they had, but my question is: how does the number of disciplinary measures compare with the past? What is it that the High Inspector of Justice has changed, compared with the predecessor structures? Because it is true that the Inspector is an entirely new structure from the standpoint of its constitutional position, but inspection activity itself is not new in Albania. It doesn't start in year... there is no year zero in this case. So it should allow us to make a comparison, I believe. How many inspectors did we have, how many people did we have who once did this work at the Ministry of Justice and at the High Council of Justice,*

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how many disciplinary measures, and how many judges were subjected to disciplinary measures and rulings; compared with today, when we have perhaps 5 times more, 6 times more inspectors than those bodies had, taken together, in one perception, or perhaps due to a lack of information. Perhaps there may be some lack of information, but that is how I see this matter. Next: what effect have your inspections had on the matter, on the length of investigations and trials, and especially on the timely issuing of the reasoning of court decisions? So, I want to know, as a lawmaker, as a representative of my constituents, what the effect of this, of this constitutional institution, is on this problem which today concerns citizens, which relates to the length of investigations and trials beyond the legal deadlines, and especially also to the timely issuing of the reasoning of court decisions, which many times exceed any possible legal deadline. What is the effect? How do you measure this? Do you have a measuring indicator? And can you tell us, for example, for 2025, 2024, what this effect is, so that we understand it? The next thing I have: what is the geography of the thematic inspections during 2025 as well? Where are you present? Are you present in Tirana, at the Court of Appeal, or in peripheral courts and prosecution offices? Another thing: you said, regarding the filling of vacancies, that there are calls but no applications, while at the same time... the European Union, on the basis of this real concern, and also of your repeated complaints, continues to regard this as one of the main findings and recommendations. Meanwhile, the inspection process itself is in vital need of it. What is the solution, in your view? Is it a matter of law? Is it a matter that judges and prosecutors do not see, do not begin their career with the inspector's office, or is there a need to... to adopt, to set certain criteria that, without undermining the criteria and the quality of their representation? For example, let's say, I also raised this with the Prosecutor General. We have many judges and prosecutors today who are of retirement age, or past it, who are very capable physically and mentally, who, precisely because of their experience, would be a very good contribution if they were, even as advisors to the inspector. They would be given the opportunity to both draw their pension and receive an additional contribution as inspectors. Their experience allows for it, even with one-year contracts, given their physical condition, in order to take up and fill this vacancy. And, I believe, it would also make it even more... it would also help, from the standpoint of quality, it would help your institution. That is the perspective. Another thing I have: what is the level of use of information technology, and specifically of artificial intelligence, in the handling – in the collection of complaints, the handling of complaints, the creation of the case file around complaints, and the traceability of their implementation? Personally, I have had occasion to see, from some young men and women, some applications relating to justice, and I am convinced that 70-80% of the work you do, if information technology were introduced more broadly, would be shortened, and there would be no need at all for inspectors, because the answer would be obtained automatically for those causes, at least, that you mentioned, which are legally graspable causes, especially through artificial intelligence. And finally, I have two more concrete questions. What is the average duration of completed disciplinary investigations and those in progress? Do you have a measuring unit for this? Because I see there are only 12 decisions to open a disciplinary investigation for 2025, whereas for 9, the procedures remained in progress at the end of the year, they were carried over. And another thing: what is the average time from the submission of the HIJ's request to the Councils' ruling? When the Councils' ruling differs from your request, what are the main reasons? Is it the standard of proof?

Is it the legal characterization of the violation? Is it the proportionality of the measure? Or procedural matters that constitute grounds for a different position? And lastly, I have a question that I think is a question... it is early, conceptually early, but it is one of my dilemmas as a lawmaker. Is it the right solution to have built the Inspector as a one-person body, or does it need to be a collegial body? Thank you.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Yes, thank you for the questions, Chairman. I'll start with the last ones I noted down. First, regarding the deadlines for disciplinary investigations: the law provides that the deadline for carrying out an investigation is 6 months, but due to the heavy workload and complexity of cases, it may be extended by a further 3 months. So the maximum deadline is 9 months. The figures we mentioned are investigation procedures that may have started, let's say, in October, and have been completed, or are currently being completed. In no case is there any missed deadline for a disciplinary investigation, because otherwise it would lapse. No case in the hands of the High Inspector of Justice has become time-barred due to a deadline being missed within the HIJ's office. Regarding the second question, which perhaps will... the last question you asked it is, in fact, a very interesting question, one I think about myself as well. And yes, as you said, it is early to give an answer, because a very important balance needs to be struck, both with the nature of the institution, the nature of the balances it must maintain, the nature of being in an environment with many challenges – both because of the problems the justice system faces, and because of the problems society has today. And undoubtedly there will need to be very strong consistency, based on standards and not on emotions, at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, in my view. But as you also said, it is early, and perhaps this could be part of a discussion I would like to continue at a later point. Regarding the question... about the level of use of AI: without doubt I agree with you that the development of technology... without doubt, it must be a reflected part of the activity of our institutions, especially in offices, which as you said, may be simpler things for artificial intelligence to identify. We, both in implementing the Assembly's recommendation and as part of the institution's strategic development, have also incorporated artificial intelligence technology into the new project we are working on. So, the project we have drawn up regarding the digitalization of every work process at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice will be put out to public procurement. Naturally, this also includes the use of artificial intelligence within whatever limits the law may allow, because it is undoubtedly a new challenge in the legal sense as well. From the information I have, there are even magistrates outside Albania who have been dismissed for using artificial intelligence beyond what the law provides for. So it is a challenge that needs to be addressed every day, including within the legal framework we have. But in any case, it is part of the project, which we will be putting out to procurement very soon. Regarding the geography of the thematic inspections: I am not aware of any court or prosecution office in Albania that we have not touched with an inspection. To tell the truth, I am 99% certain, because every year we try to reach every court and every prosecution office in the country, so as to make the Office of the High Inspector of Justice present in every court and prosecution office, naturally with different themes, because we cannot cover all courts and prosecution offices with one single theme. So that is the answer to this. The geography of the High Inspector of Justice's activity in courts and prosecution offices is broad.

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Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: *Here, forgive me, sorry, I will interject. For example, do you have thematic inspections at the Tirana Court of Appeal, at the Administrative Court of Appeal, at the Administrative Court, and at the Tirana Court of First Instance?*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Yes.

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: *In the last two years?*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Now, in terms of years I don't know, but at the Administrative Court and at the Court of First Instance we have carried out inspections for protraction of proceedings and delayed issuing of the reasoning of court decisions. At the Tirana Court of Appeal we started this year. At the Administrative Court of Appeal, let me confirm... At the Administrative Court of Appeal, we have not. But it could be part of a future discussion, since no problem has emerged for us from complaints, nor from recommendations passed on to us by institutions. So, so to speak, the choice of inspection topic is also dynamic. As for the failure to fill vacancies... it is a very complex matter. Filling vacancies with magistrates, mainly judges. I deeply believe that office needs judge-inspectors, because of their professional training; also, the output of material, or the challenges they encounter every day, would do the Office of the High Inspector of Justice good, so that in that position, judges would address not only questions but also solutions that could ease things for them and their colleagues in their work as judges, or would also identify problems. The fact that judges do not come forward relates to many factors: vacancies within the system, or perhaps that they are more interested in professionally carrying out their activity at the Court of Appeal or at the High Court, if they meet the criteria. Generally, the Office of the High Inspector of Justice has historically been seen as an office where you would handle your colleagues' work, and not everyone finds that agreeable. But I think the greatest challenge and achievement the Inspector has had regarding this matter has been giving magistrates the confidence that this institution is not an institution of blackmail, nor an institution misused for personal reasons, or for reasons other than those provided for by the Constitution and the law. Precisely in order to give them the confidence that, if they came in as inspectors, they would do the job according to the provisions of the law and not according to emotions, outside or inside the institution. Naturally, this is also linked to other matters perhaps, which we cannot address here, but in any case the fact is this: that there are no judges applying for the position of inspector. The opposite happens with prosecutors. There are many requests from prosecutors who want to come... yes, there are requests from prosecutors to come to the Office of the High Inspector of Justice as inspectors. Even within the High Prosecutorial Council we had a long-running debate among ourselves as to whether they would continue to fill the vacancies at the Office of the Inspector of Justice with inspectors, because undoubtedly the prosecution system also needs prosecutors, not only inspectors. So, in this respect, today the office has 5 inspectors, and I am very pleased with the work of the magistrates, the prosecutor-inspectors, because over time they are carrying out even more thematic inspections, more recommendations for the system, even within the prosecution system itself. So, so to speak, it is a work experience that has served them well, and the fact that they have asked to continue their secondment for a second term at the High Inspector of Justice is an assessment of their work, but naturally also of the institution of the High Inspector of Justice.

I have tried to compensate for the lack of judge-inspectors by bringing in two judge-magistrates to the cabinet of the High Inspector of Justice. Today we have two judge-advisors in the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, who are an important part of the assistance, or of the work carried out at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice. As for staffing, today we have 10 inspectors and 23 assistant inspectors, which makes 33, including the legal directorate, which should have 6 or 7 lawyers working within the legal directorate. So, around 40 individuals at the Office of the Justice Inspectorate deal with inspection matters, the follow-up of recommendations, the legal acts issued by the High Inspector of Justice, with every....

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: *Around 40 who serve that purpose?*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Around 40 who serve the purpose...

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: *35%?*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Around 40 individuals. Undoubtedly, the rest are part of the obligations the institution has, as a public institution. There is a finance office, a public procurement office, a services office, and so on. But in any case, the structure has gone, two or three times, through the relevant committees in the Assembly, and has also been approved by the Assembly with the relevant analysis. Regarding the work done previously by the earlier inspectorates, I think it is difficult to compare them, both because of the nature of the work, because of the workload, and because of the state the system is in today. The system was different before; it has different challenges today, in my view. So it is difficult to make a comparison. I do not know how many inspections were carried out by the Ministries of Justice before; I do not have that data. What I have focused on, together with the inspectors, is carrying out the duty I have, in accordance with the laws and in accordance with the Constitution. Naturally, the emotions and challenges the system faces may be many, but I think what we must agree on is that these are challenges that cannot be, or are not, resolved by the Office of the High Inspector of Justice alone. It is a very complex matter. I stress this once again: there is not a single case on the desk of the High Inspector of Justice, no magistrate, prosecutor, or judge who deserved to be made subject to disciplinary proceedings and was not made subject to disciplinary proceedings. And these are not my own findings, but complaints that have also been verified by those who monitor the work of the High Inspector of Justice. The effect of the inspections on the length of the delays. In fact, this is a very fair question, to tell the truth. We try to balance it both against our workload and against the number of inspectors we have, because measuring the effectiveness of the recommendations you have left requires carrying out a second inspection, or a second verification process, of the things that were found or recommended. And naturally, this requires time, it also requires human resources, and it also requires a methodology, which we are developing in cooperation with international partners as well. This year we have planned two follow-up inspections, to measure two thematic inspections we carried out some time ago, and to see, first, to understand for ourselves how this kind of follow-up inspection can be carried out more quickly or better, and naturally to arrive at a methodology that can shorten both the time, and perhaps also the work processes, which do not need to be lengthy, perhaps by way of a thematic inspection.

Second, measuring the effectiveness of the recommendations, I think, depends on many factors. First, it relates to the reforms, the reforms of the justice system are long-term processes, which require considerable time to be implemented effectively and sustainably. Second, the process of following up on the implementation of the recommendations left by the HIJ takes time, because their effectiveness also depends on the recommendations being implemented by other institutions that is, on the interaction of other institutions, such as the Councils, the Prosecutor General, the School of Magistrates, the courts, the prosecution offices, the administrations, and the prosecution offices' administrations, and so on. Third, I think the need for a coordinated approach and inter-institutional cooperation is essential, also through the Councils, the Prosecutor General, and the HIJ, so that in identifying the problems the system needs addressed, they can be tackled through thematic and institutional inspection, which is just as important as thematic inspection. Fourth, in a justice system which has major challenges, ranging from infrastructure to security matters, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of the HIJ's recommendation against a much larger challenge, as regards the work judges must do and the conditions in which they must do that work. That is why I say that measuring the effectiveness of the body, in this case, the High Inspector of Justice – is a complex process, a difficult process, and a long process. But in any case, we are verifying this and taking measures so that every recommendation given is, first of all, tracked, so that we understand why it has not been implemented, in the cases where it has not been implemented, or how it has been implemented, in the cases where it has been implemented. Yes, one very important question, I think, is: to what extent have the findings of the High Court, the Constitutional Court, or the European Court of Human Rights been reflected in the inspections carried out by the High Inspector of Justice? The relationship with the High Court is very professional, I think, because in every case the High Court has notified the High Inspector of Justice. In those cases where it has encountered, or identified, breaches of the reasonable time-limit for the conduct of judicial proceedings, or for the issuing of the reasoning of decisions, we have verified them; that is, they are verification processes. In those cases where we have assessed that they could be part of a disciplinary investigation, we have acted. In those cases where we have judged that the time-limit was reasonable given their workload, and no instances of negligence appeared on the part of the magistrate regarding the breach of the time-limit for the proceedings, or for the issuing of the reasoning of the court decision, we have proceeded to archive the case.

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: *Has there been a case where the court told a magistrate that they had misapplied the law, openly, that they had violated the law.*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Clearly, yes. We have one such case in hand, for example, one such case. So it is a dynamic of reporting, including through those rulings that come to us from the High Court, or also those we identify ourselves. We have had cases of proceedings against a magistrate where there was such a ruling; the first case was of that kind.

There have been cases of judges who were in conflict with a unifying decision of the High Court, for example. So, there is also a case we have now, a magistrate who will be leaving through disciplinary proceedings, precisely for this reason he will be leaving, since his ruling was in conflict with the decision of the High Court, in relation to the case he handled. So, so to speak, it is dynamic. I cannot say how many cases there are right now, but in any case it is a process that we follow rigorously, at every stage of the work we are engaged in. We also follow the rulings of the ECtHR closely, in those cases which, in our view, warrant and justify the intervention of the High Inspector of Justice. But naturally we assess this in light of the obligation we have, also in relation to the ambiguities the system itself displays. So it is a process that we consult on thoroughly, and of course all of this that you have said could be part of another discussion, which we will hold at the general meeting of inspectors, but this is my answer to this question.

Regarding the instruction, or the general instructions issued by the Prosecutor General, we have had two cases of proceedings against prosecutors. In both cases, the High Prosecutorial Council decided to overturn the High Inspector of Justice. And to link this with the other question you asked: in all the cases where the proposals made by the High Inspector of Justice were overturned, they were not overturned because of shortcomings in the investigation, or an incomplete investigation, or an unprofessional or non-procedural investigation, but it was simply a matter of proportionality, or of the Council's discretion regarding the measure, mainly regarding the measure. Indeed, even as we speak today, there is one such case where we are awaiting the ruling of the High Prosecutorial Council, concerning a case involving a magistrate. I believe these were the questions, as we noted them down. My apologies if I have overlooked anyone...

Committee Chairman Fatmir Xhafaj: *It is not a deliberate omission; I trust the staff, Dëshira, have kept good notes for you, so... OK. Do we have anything else from our colleagues? OK, good. We will close here, then. I believe this was a useful discussion, in keeping with the purpose of this hearing, which concerns the implementation of the 2025 resolution and the recommendations for 2026. We will vote on the recommendations in principle – only in principle, Mr. Hasalla. We will give the necessary time for reflection, and on the basis of the discussion held here, including the objections and disputes, but of course also in order to reach agreement, as far as we can, and also to agree with the opposition; part of which, for objective reasons, is not here today, due to another international engagement. So we will vote on them in principle, while leaving it for a second moment to reflect on the objections. Who is in favour, in principle? Against, none! Abstention, none, agreed? We will close this committee meeting here. Thank you, Mr. High Inspector of Justice. Thank you, Madam Deputy Inspector and Secretary General. Good day to all.*



HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE AT THE HIJ ON JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND INSPECTION STANDARDS



The High Inspector of Justice, Mr. Artur Metani, welcomed the Prosecutor General at the Supreme Court of the Netherlands, Mr. Edwin Bleichrodt, who was accompanied by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Albania, Mr. Reinout Vos, Ms. Anne Tahapary of the Dutch Training and Study Centre for the Judiciary (SSR), and Ms. Edlira Osmani, Senior Policy Adviser on the Rule of Law at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Albania. The visit included a High Level Dialogue between the Prosecutor General at the Supreme Court of the Netherlands, Mr. Edwin Bleichrodt, and the HIJ Unit of Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors, on the topic “Judicial Accountability and Inspection Standards”. During the dialogue, the Dutch and Albanian experiences in inspecting the justice system were discussed extensively and practices and approaches concerning professional standards and judicial accountability mechanisms were exchanged.

The objective of this strategic dialogue was to promote institutional exchange between the Office of the High Inspector of Justice of Albania and the Office of the Prosecutor General at the Supreme Court of the Netherlands on judicial accountability, inspection methodologies, and systemic challenges within the justice system. Particular attention was paid to balancing judicial independence with effective oversight,

improving the efficiency and quality of justice, and strengthening public trust through transparent, risk-based inspection practices in accordance with European rule of law standards.

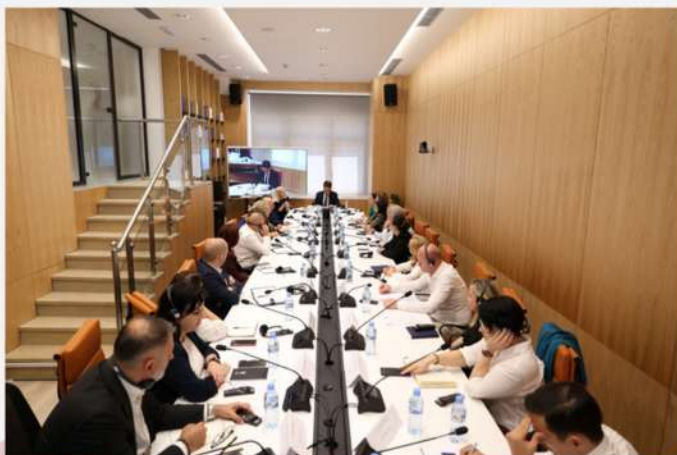
Drawing on his experience leading a body of 22 general advocates that exercises powers in the area of oversight and disciplinary proceedings against judges, the Prosecutor General at the Supreme Court of the Netherlands, Mr. Edwin Bleichrodt, presented specific working models and institutional practices. In his remarks, he focused on judicial accountability as a complement to judicial independence, as well as on European Union rule of law standards. He also addressed the importance of identifying systemic issues beyond the individual responsibility of magistrates, as an approach that contributes to improving the functioning of the justice system. The discussions highlighted similarities between the practice of the Office of the High Inspector of Justice and the Dutch model, particularly regarding the manner in which inspections are planned and determined, based on issues identified through submitted complaints and on risk analysis.

The meeting was organized within the framework of the MATRA project of the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as part of the “Strengthening Judicial Integrity” project, which is implemented by the Dutch Training and Study Centre for the Judiciary.











SPEECH OF THE HIGH INSPECTOR OF JUSTICE AT THE MEETING OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM



“On the implementation of the Cross-Sector Justice Strategy 2024–2030: Achievements and challenges in fulfilling obligations within the framework of European integration”

Honourable Minister,

Honourable international partners,

Honourable heads of the institutions of the justice system,

Thank you for the invitation, which demonstrates the importance of cooperation between the institutions of the justice system and the other branches of government. This cooperation should be an institutional normality and a permanent way of functioning, rather than a sporadic practice dictated by particular commitments or circumstances.

Today's meeting represents more than a reporting moment on the implementation of the Cross-Sector Justice Strategy 2024–2030. It is an opportunity to reflect on the way our institutions coordinate their activities, how they measure the results of the reforms, and how they build mechanisms that serve to improve the quality of justice, strengthen the rule of law, and fulfil Albania's commitments in the European integration process.

Today, the justice reform has entered a new phase. It requires institutions that not only exercise their constitutional and legal powers, but also identify, analyze and address the systemic issues that affect the functioning of the justice system.

According to the annual monitoring report, significant developments were recorded during 2025 across all five pillars of the Cross-Sector Justice Strategy. The second and third policy objectives of the CSJS, which relate to strengthening the independence, impartiality and accountability of the justice system and improving the quality of justice, have achieved significant results despite the challenges identified year after year regarding vacancies. I would mention here the increase in the number of complaints reviewed,

as well as the increase in the number of inspections, (thematic inspections) and, consequently, recommendations. Year after year, the High Inspector of Justice has not only demonstrated a steady increase in performance, but also quality through the issuance of recommendations and the measurement of their results, thereby contributing to the improvement of the quality of work in the courts and prosecution offices.

The more than six years of experience of the work of the High Inspector of Justice has shown that the most important challenges are not related only to cases of the individual responsibility of magistrates through disciplinary proceedings, but to the detection of systemic issues that hinder the normal functioning of the justice system, the analysis of those issues, and the provision of a real and concrete contribution to improving the quality of justice and the culture of integrity.

A justice system is not improved only by imposing sanctions.

It is consolidated when it builds the necessary instruments to prevent issues before they produce consequences.

The challenges currently faced by the justice system are neither individual nor the exclusive responsibility of one or several institutions. Many of them are systemic issues, related to the institutional organization, the structure of the system, the heavy workload, vacancies, or the need for legislative intervention.

For this reason, our approach must also evolve. Alongside the analysis of individual responsibilities, we must focus on analyzing the phenomena, identifying the causes that have produced them, and designing sustainable solutions. From a culture based primarily on punishment, we must move towards a culture of prevention, improvement, and the continuous enhancement of the quality of justice.

This is precisely what citizens expect from us, and it was one of the fundamental objectives of the justice reform undertaken ten years ago.

The path towards an efficient and sustainable justice system requires institutional coordination, transparency and respect for the principle of the separation of powers. Only through cooperation and shared commitment can we guarantee a justice system that serves the citizen and that can function on the solid foundations of professionalism, integrity and credibility.

No institution can resolve the systemic issues of justice on its own. Competences are exercised individually, but the responsibility for building a functional, effective justice system that responds to the expectations of the public belongs to all of us. If the path towards the conclusion of the negotiations with the European Union, not only as a technical process but also as a process of values, proves successful, then the justice system also has its share of the merit in this journey. But it is equally true that if this process fails, the justice system will also bear its share of the responsibility.

Therefore, inter-institutional cooperation should not be seen merely as an obligation to be fulfilled based on the recommendations issued by the Assembly of Albania or on the achievement of the objectives of the Strategy. The coordination of the activities of our institutions should be perceived and developed as an indispensable instrument for consolidating the standards of an independent,

efficient and expeditious justice system that responds to the public's need to obtain justice within a reasonable time.

Today we need institutions that not only respond to problems, but are also capable of anticipating them; institutions that analyze phenomena and recommend solutions; institutions that not only report statistics, but use them to improve decision-making, because the quality of the justice system is determined not only by the decisions it makes, but also by its ability to learn from experience, to correct weaknesses and to build ever higher standards of integrity and accountability.

I am convinced that the new Inter-Institutional Cooperation Mechanism for the Implementation of the Cross-Sector Justice Strategy 2024–2030 and the Justice Scoreboard will contribute to building a new culture of cooperation among the institutions of the justice system, based on coordination, transparency and inter-institutional cooperation. The High Inspector of Justice has offered his full commitment and contribution, because I personally believe that only when we succeed in creating a spirit and culture of sustainable institutional cooperation, without limiting ourselves to identifying quantitative data but by addressing the phenomena that affect us all, will we be able to fulfil the standards required by the European integration process and, more importantly, what the public expects from us and from the reform: justice that is of higher quality, more efficient, more trustworthy and faster.

Thank you!



JULY OF HIJ IN NUMBERS

During July 2026, the Office of the High Inspector of Justice administered **113 complaints**, of which **111** were submitted by citizens and 2 by institutions. The Office of the High Inspector of Justice issued the standard acknowledgement of receipt for all complaints entering the institution for the first time during July 2026.

Complaints involving judges and prosecutors were assigned to Inspectors and are currently at different stages of processing, including initial review, archiving, verification, or draft decision issuance.

ARCHIVED	VERIFICATION	DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDING
Out of 269 cases reviewed, 128 decisions were rendered: • 97 archiving decisions after initial review • 31 archiving decisions after verification	43 verification decisions	- 1 decision to initiate a disciplinary investigation against 1 magistrate (prosecutor) - 2 decisions to conclude disciplinary investigations against 2 magistrates (one judge, one prosecutor) - 1 decision to suspend a disciplinary investigation against 1 magistrate (judge) - 3 requests for disciplinary proceedings against 3 magistrates (2 judges, 1 prosecutor)

COMPLAINT PROCESS AT HIJ

To facilitate this process for interested persons, HIJ has published on the official website a special complaint form, which:

- Can be completed directly and submitted online;
- Can be downloaded, completed and sent by email to info@ild.al or by mail at the address Boulevard "Dëshmorët e Kombit", Building no.13, Tirana.
- It can also be completed by being present personally at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice and if necessary, asking assistance by the team of the Complaints and Public relations Office.

Within 5 days Upon receiving the complaint, the High Inspector of Justice confirms in writing its receiving.

The criteria for the admissibility of the complaint are published on the official website of HIJ www.ild.al, in the section "How complaints are accepted".

HPC ACCEPTS HIJ'S REQUEST FOR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS AGAINST PROSECUTOR A.K.



At the session held today, High Prosecutorial Council (HPC), accepted the request of the High Inspector of Justice (HIJ) for the imposition of the disciplinary measure “Public reprimand” against magistrate A.K., prosecutor at the Prosecution Office of the Court of First Instance of General Jurisdiction of Korçë. The measure was requested by the HIJ for violations of the provisions regulating the organization and functioning of the prosecution office, as well as for violations of the rules on confidentiality and the prohibition of disseminating information related to an ongoing or completed investigation.

These proceedings came after the reconsideration of the HPC’s previous decision of October 2, 2025, by which the HIJ’s request for the imposition of a disciplinary measure against the prosecutor had been rejected. Following the HIJ’s appeal, the Administrative Court of Appeal upheld the claim, instructing the HPC to re-examine the request for disciplinary proceedings.

According to the HIJ’s investigative report, prosecutor A.K. signed official documents without having the relevant competence and also extracted and sent copies of documents,

which were part of the case file of a matter still under investigation, to third parties.

According to the HIJ, these actions bypassed the authority of the head of the prosecution office, undermined the institutional image of the prosecution body, and created a risk to the proper conduct of the investigation. Furthermore, the publication of procedural documents, it is noted in the HIJ’s investigative report concerning A.K., may negatively affect public trust, since the prosecution office operates in accordance with the law and not on the basis of the individual will of the magistrate.

During the reconsideration of the case, HIJ once again requested that the HPC accept the request for the imposition of the disciplinary measure “Public reprimand” against prosecutor A.K., for the disciplinary violations provided for in Article 102, paragraph 1, letters “g” and “j” of Law No. 96/2016 “On Status” as amended. The HPC decided to accept this request and impose the disciplinary measure proposed by the HIJ.

Q&A SESSION OF THE HIGH INSPECTOR OF JUSTICE BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



Chair of the Committee Ulsi Manja: Now, I will give the floor to Ms. Bylykbashi to present a report on behalf of the committee, with the aim that the issues set out in the report may also come out through the colleagues' questions.

Member of Parliament Aulona Bylykbashi: Thank you, Mr. Chair, honorable High Inspector of Justice. The Committee on Legal Affairs and Public Administration, in fulfillment of its constitutional function of parliamentary oversight, reviewed the 2025 Annual Report of the High Inspector of Justice. The High Inspector of Justice is one of the fundamental institutions in the constitutional architecture of the justice reform. Its role in guaranteeing the accountability, integrity, and professional standards of magistrates is an indispensable component in strengthening citizens' trust in the justice system. From the committee's analysis, it appears that during 2025, the HIJ continued the process of institutional consolidation and made noticeable progress in several important areas. In particular, the committee positively assesses the fact that the majority of Parliament's recommendations for 2025 have been implemented or are in the process of implementation. In fact, out of eight recommendations, seven have been fully implemented, while one has been partially implemented. Concrete steps have been taken to formalize the monitoring of inspection recommendations, to develop analytical reports on the complaints received, to strengthen institutional transparency, as well as to advance the process of digitalizing the institution's activities. Furthermore, the committee appreciates the increasingly greater orientation of the High Inspector of Justice toward thematic inspections, the analysis of systemic issues, and the use of statistical data as the basis for planning inspection activities. The report shows that during 2025, more than 3,200 complaints were administered, thus reflecting a high level of citizens' trust in this institutional mechanism. A considerable portion of them relate to procedural delays, the reasoning of decisions, and the quality of the administration of justice, which demonstrates that the main challenges of the system continue to be more structural in nature than individual.

At the same time, the committee notes that the activity of the High Inspector of Justice should not be assessed solely on the basis of the volume of cases handled, but above all on the basis of the real impact that its inspections and recommendations produce in improving the functioning of the justice system. And in this regard, significant challenges still remain. Vacancies in the corps of inspectors continue to directly affect institutional capacities and the duration of procedures. The digitalization process, although it has entered an important phase of development, requires further acceleration. Likewise, it remains necessary to strengthen interinstitutional cooperation with the governing bodies of the justice system, particularly with regard to access to electronic systems and the monitoring of the implementation of inspection recommendations. The committee considers that part of the issues identified by the High Inspector of Justice do not stem solely from the activity of the institution itself but are also related to broader challenges of the judicial system, such as the heavy workload of the courts and prosecution offices, vacancies, procedural administration, and case management. Within this framework, the committee attaches particular importance to the development of mechanisms for measuring the impact of recommendations, the use of methodologies based on risk analysis, the strengthening of analytical capacities, and the creation of modern systems for monitoring institutional performance. An aspect of particular importance is also the European dimension of the activity of the High Inspector of Justice. The reports of the European Commission point out that the institution has consolidated its role in the architecture of the justice reform and has actively contributed to the European integration process, particularly within the framework of Chapter 23 and the rule of law monitoring mechanisms. At the same time, international partners continue to emphasize the need to strengthen institutional capacities, fill vacancies, standardize inspection procedures, and increase the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms.

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The committee considers these recommendations to be important guidance for the institution's further development. At the same time, the committee considers that there is still room to increase the effectiveness of inspection activities, strengthen the impact of recommendations, and further develop modern mechanisms for monitoring and analyzing performance in the justice system. Thank you!

Chair of the Committee Ulsi Manja: Yes, thank you, Ms. Bylykbashi. Now the meeting is open for questions. Whoever has questions, or if there are both questions and discussion together, please, but first for questions. Who has questions? We have had reports here in the committee from the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, and the Prosecutor General. Now today we have the High Inspector of Justice. Who has questions and who has any concern? The floor is open. No, Zegjine is waiting for someone else to start first and then take the floor in the middle. You understand? So the opposition is waiting to hear all of us first, and then ask questions, and as far as I can see, there won't be any questions at all. No, it doesn't matter, you take the floor.

Member of Parliament Aulona Bylykbashi: Actually, I have only one question that is also related to what was observed from the report. A high number of complaints addressed to your institution can be seen, which, as I also said in my presentation, on the one hand shows an increase in citizens' trust in this institution, but based on the review that you have carried out of these complaints, do we have an analysis or final data from the decisions taken regarding these complaints, which require a solution or a referral through closer cooperation with the other justice institutions in order to improve the judicial process, with the aim of providing faster and fairer justice to citizens? Because it is also evident from the report that this cooperation with the other institutions, with the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, and the Prosecutor General, seems to still be cooperation in formal terms, that is, in reciprocal invitations to working groups, without data. More specifically, what are the results of this cooperation, what are the areas in which you have cooperated? But it is very important that we look at this cooperation within this framework, namely in the context of the data derived from the decisions on complaints, and how these are then referred within this cooperation in order to influence the normal process of judicial decision-making, which is mainly related to delivering justice within due time, within a reasonable time. Thank you.

Chair of the Committee Ulsi Manja: Yes, Mr. Metani.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Thank you, honorable Member of Parliament. The short answer is no, but in fact I like the idea very much and I had not thought of it in the way you raised it. And it is one of the things that justice institutions should do. So, this kind of reporting, the issues that we raise, first of all should be discussed among ourselves before they come here, in my opinion. So, in other words, even if they are separate competencies, the HIJ, the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, nevertheless we have a common language of values upon which we should come together in order to resolve these situations that we face. Genuine cooperation, what you say is true, is still more formal than organic. This comes from many reasons and there is no need to assign, that is, responsibility either, because that is simply the nature of the relationship. To be fair, it should be acknowledged that all the institutions have made efforts. That is to say, we have always been promoters and proactive in convening joint meetings since 2022, in order to talk about the things that concern us.

Several meetings have been held. To be fair, they have not been very fruitful from the perspective of producing findings or reaching a common language regarding the concerns that we have. Nevertheless, the meetings are being restarted, also through the assistance that the European Union has provided through its missions to facilitate these kinds of meetings. But I think that cooperation is not a matter of law or a matter of "either you have it or you don't." That is to say, this is something that will require its own time, it will require the right people, it will require new practices; it is something that is still developing. Returning again to your question, one of the things that I think we should do, and perhaps we will now do after this idea that you have given me, at least, is that these kinds of concerns that we have should become part of our discussions with one another. So, if the High Inspector of Justice has concerns regarding its inability to resolve the complaints submitted by citizens about the duration of judicial proceedings, which do not necessarily constitute disciplinary violations, then these are matters for which measures should be taken; they should be listed, or at least addressed to the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, or the Prosecutor General through their respective mechanisms. So, in this spirit, I think it is a very good idea for the institutions themselves to come together and talk about this situation. Thank you.

Chair of the Committee Ulsi Manja: Yes, any other questions? Yes, Ms. Çausi.

Member of Parliament Zegjine Çausi: To continue what Ms. Bylykbashi said, it follows that the relationship between the High Inspector of Justice, the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council, and the Prosecutor General's Office is either not good or there is no relationship at all, since it has not been possible even to draft the cooperation protocol. At least, that is how I see it from what you yourself said a little earlier. My second question concerns the complaints. The first question: what kind of cooperation do you have with these institutions? What has prevented these institutions from implementing or drafting the cooperation protocol? Because you said that we have held meetings, but they have not worked and we have achieved nothing from these meetings; at least that is how I understood it. My second question concerns the complaints. Given that most complaints relate to procedural delays and decision-making, what will be the inspection priorities for 2026? My third question: Do you think legislative amendments are needed to make the HIJ's recommendations more binding? Thank you.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Yes, thank you, Ms. Çausi. Regarding your first question, perhaps I expressed myself incorrectly, but I did not mean, nor is it the case, that the cooperation does not function. The cooperation should be more effective, because this distinction is very important. So, we fulfill the legal obligation, we meet, we discuss, but the issue is that beyond this legal obligation there is also individual motivation, which I do not always find expressed in meetings or through the form of cooperation that these governing bodies should have. This is not an issue of the justice institutions; it is an issue of ours. Now we also have to be aware of what is happening. That is to say, this is a characteristic that does not apply only to those who work in the justice institutions. Certainly, the meetings should have been more effective, but the fact that the institutions meet, the fact that they also solve things, shows that it functions but it should have been much more effective, viewed in relation to the needs of the system, in relation to the needs that society has today, and in relation to the new institutional culture that the institutions should produce, that is to say, not only the justice institutions. But this goes beyond that. This is my opinion on what we are discussing.

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Secondly, regarding the inspection priorities, we have determined them in the annual plan that was approved in January 2026. I would like to explain to you how we select the inspection topics. First, we select them based on the analysis of the subject matter of the complaints addressed to the High Inspector of Justice, that is, what citizens complain about the most. Secondly, we also take into account the information that comes to us from the courts and the Prosecution Offices, periodic information that we request from the courts and the Prosecution Office in order to see the issues they encounter. Thirdly, through other sources of information, including from other institutions, that is, when they propose thematic inspections, as has been the case with the councils, the Prosecutor General's Office, or if there is a complainant who raises an issue or a phenomenon within the system, we again discuss it in meetings with the inspectors, and taking into account the human resources that we have, the time, the type of inspection, we arrive at the calendar, which is publicly available on the website. This year the calendar provides for nine thematic inspections, which, from our point of view, affect the foundation or the essence of the concerns that citizens have, from the duration of proceedings to the scheduling of court hearings, the effectiveness of magistrates' work during hearings, and so on.

Regarding the continuation of your second question: is there a need for legislative amendments to make the recommendations binding? In fact, this has also been mentioned in previous discussions. Personally, I think not, because a recommendation is a recommendation. That is to say, it relates to what I said at the beginning, namely that beyond the legal obligation, institutions must also have the motivation to do things, and not everything is solved through obligation, not everything is solved through force. Things are solved through trust in each other's work and through proper human institutional relations, because we also have to consider the inverse, namely whether the recommendations produced by the institution of the High Inspector of Justice themselves could be problematic. So, in other words, the process of recommendations issued by the High Inspector of Justice should be a process of consultation with the institution that implements the recommendations. It should be a dynamic process of completing them or even changing them if the institutions find reasons or difficulties in implementing them. In other words, it is something for which it is difficult to make the implementation of the recommendations issued by the institution of the High Inspector of Justice legally binding, in my personal view. Nevertheless, perhaps this requires a deeper analysis, but that was my initial reaction to this question.

Chair of the Committee Ulsi Manja: *Colleague Komici has asked for the floor for a question.*

Member of Parliament Olsi Komici: *Thank you, Mr. Chair, honorable Mr. Metani. Now, the nature of the complaints that come to your institution is understood to be diverse. There are complaints concerning corruption, concerning unjust decisions, which in a way overlap with one another. So, where there are allegations of unjust decision-making, a considerable percentage is also related to corruption. Likewise, there are also complaints of nature that different court decisions are issued in writing with delays for various reasons, whether of an objective nature or also of a subjective nature. First of all, I would like to know your perception or your opinion, whether institutional or personal, based on the considerable experience you have in the field of justice in various state institutions. That is to say, have you conducted any analysis regarding this relationship, namely complaints concerning corruption or unjust decision-making, in relation to your own decisions?*

And what interests me most is how the balance of public perception develops, that is, the restoration of public trust in the justice system—how does this relationship stand? In other words, what is the public perception, in your opinion, based on the analysis or the decisions that you have made regarding complaints of this category? ...my second question concerns the backlog, which in fact is a chronic problem in the justice institutions, both in the Prosecution Office and in the judiciary. I raise this in connection with the issue of issuing written decisions. I would like your opinion on how action could be taken, or whether there is any procedure or any supporting element, based especially on your experience, that could help reduce the backlog. Thank you.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: So, regarding the first question, according to the law, every decision of the High Inspector of Justice may be appealed before the councils, before the High Prosecutorial Council if the complaint concerns a prosecutor, or before the High Judicial Council if the complaint concerns a judge. The High Inspector of Justice has carried out a very broad awareness campaign for two things: first, it has asked everyone, every citizen, institutions, and everyone interested in justice matters to submit a complaint. Why? It is important that a complaint be submitted because only by going through this process does the complainant have the right, first, to receive information about what is happening within the office of the High Inspector of Justice regarding the handling of the complaint, and second, the complainant acquires the right to appeal the HIJ's decision if dissatisfied with the decision of the High Inspector of Justice, because this is the only way to make the institution subject to oversight. And I note with satisfaction that the number of complaints filed by citizens against the decisions of the High Inspector of Justice, in the sense of appeals submitted to the Councils, is not a small number. At the same time, I am also pleased that, on the other hand, in no case have the Councils, as I pointed out above, nor the Appeals Chamber when it has had the opportunity, nor the European Court of Human Rights, in those cases where it has conducted a review, overturned procedures carried out by the High Inspector of Justice as incomplete, unprofessional, or involving double standards...and for me this is the most important thing. Out of more than eight thousand complaints processed by the High Inspector of Justice over these six years, there is not a single case showing that the High Inspector of Justice has applied double standards in case X or case Y.... this is also related to the continuation of your question, namely the issue of public perception regarding the High Inspector of Justice. I do not know exactly what you had in mind—whether you meant public perception regarding the High Inspector of Justice, or perhaps I misunderstood? Ah, okay! Regarding the justice system, this is also something that requires a mechanism, a methodology, and certainly other institutions that carry out this process. For me and for the inspectors who work in the office of the High Inspector of Justice, it has been and continues to be important, from day one until today, to fulfill the obligation that we have. That is, the obligation established by the constitutional framework and the law. Whether this mechanism chosen by the legislator, through the adoption of the constitutional and legislative amendments, will then translate into increased public perception is another matter. But the High Inspector of Justice is rigorously implementing the obligation established by the Constitution and the law, and perhaps this requires an earlier analysis as to whether it will necessarily produce greater public perception or not regarding the work of the justice system.

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Nevertheless, in any case, if I may elaborate on the question, because it is very important, the accountability system has two very important components: answerability and responsibility. Answerability relates to elements concerning the appointment of magistrates, the initial training of magistrates, the verification of their assets, the role of the higher courts in supervising the work of judges and prosecutors, and the guarantees they should have or the integrity checks carried out through the respective institutions. So, once this entire system of answerability is functioning, if somewhere it fails and does not work, then we move to the system of responsibility, and responsibility is civil, criminal, and administrative. The Constitution and the law have provided mechanisms that activate these three types of responsibility but we cannot seek to resolve situations, or the malfunctioning of one part of the answerability system, necessarily through the disciplinary responsibility of magistrates. This is very important to me, and that is why I say that the relationships between institutions should be more flexible, in order to understand precisely this role that we have and to contribute as much as we can, because not everything depends on the work of the justice institutions. It also depends, I would say, on infrastructure, which requires another kind of cooperation, including with the Government and with Parliament. So, in other words, this entire process is complex. That is why it is very difficult, in my view, to measure public perception, because the situation is what it is, but there is a very large mechanism that must function as a whole in the best possible way. If one link fails to function, it affects the entire chain of the work of the other institutions. Thank you.

Chair of the Committee Ulsi Manja: Thank you, Mr. Metani. Mr. Bylykbashi!

Member of Parliament Oerd Bylykbashi: Thank you, Mr. Chair! Thank you for the report, honorable High Inspector of Justice. Mr. Metani, in less than a month, it will be 10 years since we adopted, with 140 votes, the justice reform, the constitutional amendments, because afterwards the justice reform deviated from what was adopted. Even what was adopted has its problems, but nevertheless it received the consensus that it received at the time, and I believe there is no ambiguity here. Starting with the Chair, we were on the same Justice Reform Committee, but also others who have followed my public positions over these 10 years know this. My main criticism has been directed at the architecture of the system, specifically at the fragmentation of the justice system. At the beginning, in fact, the number of institutional acronyms was such that even the best expert would forget them along the way and could not make it to the last one, but some of them were eliminated. So, the system would have been even more fragmented than the one we have today. And one of the problems that it would produce—you could see it sitting at the table, looking at it on paper—was that these institutions, if they did not come into conflict, would need time to find common ground with one another. Where do I have my competence, where do you have yours? When one sends something, will the other implement it or not? That is another matter. And from what you report—and this is not the first time but the umpteenth time—and also from the answers that you gave, one understands a certain kind of, let's say, frustration in exercising, and in the need to exercise, such an important duty. So, practically, you are one of the key elements of the system. The debate about the inspector being outside, that is, being a separate institution, is very old, much older than 2016, the removal from the Ministry of Justice of that part, remaining within the magistracy system in order to be more independent. But here we are.

So, you issue recommendations and afterwards others decide whether they will implement them or not. You say there is cooperation, but it remains at the formal level, and afterwards there is no follow-up. So, I also agree with what you are saying. There are two things. It is not only internal, it is not only that you are obliged to cooperate at such high constitutional levels, but it is also an honor to exercise that function, and part of that is to be active so that this system functions even better than what has been written. That is what I believe, and that was one of the hopes that, despite a poor constitutional design of the justice system, general goodwill and individual goodwill would fill the gaps. Apparently, here we are, and we have this situation. Likewise, I agree with what you are saying. Perhaps it is not necessary to change the law, because we constantly find changing the law to be the recipe. There is a saying that is very old, around 25 years old, from another institution—not about this but about other issues—which said: "Changing the law is not a recipe for replacing the lack of goodwill." No matter how much we write, we will still end up with terrible laws that go beyond even the most detailed secondary legislation. We cannot do this. It becomes fragile, unenforceable, and so on. Nevertheless, there is a very high number of complaints that come to you and perhaps when you do not provide answers—well, part of what I am saying is discussion, these are observations—I will say that we can ask questions continuously from one reporting session to another and nothing happens. I want to understand is how much of these complaints that come to you—you filter them, you analyze them—are complaints about the way the justice system functions, and how many are because, in the end, the system—not the justice system, but the system, let's say, the administration, the state—has forced people to collide with a system that ultimately remains a bottleneck. The judiciary, as it is, at least because of the procedures, is more constrained; it is not that agile in solving problems, otherwise it would make mistakes. So, people have been forced to go there and collide with a system that becomes more and more overloaded, and in the end they no longer even understand where their real problem lies. So, from this kind of volume, how much do you understand? You said there have been 8,000 complaints over six years, while at the same time you referred to another number of over 3,000 for this year. So, over six years there have been more than 8,000, and around 3,000 are the most recent. So, the numbers are very high. The solution cannot be found at the HIJ, nor is it solved in the judiciary by sending everything there. So, people collide with the judiciary and then look for where to take their grievance. At one time they looked for it through the vetting process. They filed complaints seeking a solution, they looked for the solution in vetting. Afterwards, now it is at SPAK. Perhaps next it will be the High Inspector of Justice. Everywhere, the focus will always shift. The problem, in fact, is somewhere else. So, people are forced to go to the judiciary. They receive a very simple fine and cannot find a solution. The possibility to appeal is not easy; the burden is difficult. There is also the terrible perception. Entering the justice system is like the inscription in Dante's *Inferno*: "Abandon all hope, you who enter here." Your story is over. It is very simple. If someone calculates that today it takes 16 years to complete the process—and last year it had improved by 16 days, now perhaps it has improved by a few more days, so it may have gone down a little—anyone who thinks they can find a solution regarding money, property, another injustice, a contract, loses hope. Around two-thirds of the backlog consists of civil and administrative cases, the greater part being civil and administrative, while the remainder consists of criminal cases, and SPAK is only a fraction. We all talk about SPAK, but in fact the problems are elsewhere.

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Now, all those people are involved in civil proceedings where the parties are two individuals who have nothing to do with the state. When they think that the issue they have will be resolved after 16 years, they are horrified. Of course, this will also lead to even more complaints coming to you because, in the end, one party thinks that an injustice has been committed against them, and the other thinks the same, and that is what happens. But we have a deterioration of the system, of the system's performance. I do not know whether you are in a position to answer this, but certainly what interests me is to understand why, out of all these cases examined, more than 1,600 cases examined by you, there have been only 13 disciplinary proceedings and only 8 magistrates referred. I understand that often there is no evidence; sometimes people simply cannot bear the injustice they are suffering any longer. We do not have an endless number of judges. The solution is not—at least that is how I understood you—that it is only the most severe disciplinary measure. Judges should also understand that they may need to change course, eventually, and prosecutors as well. But the number is small. Is this also because you find that your recommendations are not effective, because the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council do not respond to you? Because if this fragmentation of the system that I mentioned earlier causes this—you do it once, twice, three times, year after year you see that it has no effect—then perhaps we should think of another solution at the constitutional level, or perhaps not, I do not know. But we need to understand from you whether these small numbers are because there really is no evidence, or because, in the end, the system produces nothing. Is it worth constantly confronting a system like this? In the end, you will cooperate with one another, and one hand will wash the other. No one escapes that. It comes as a result of this design, for which you are ultimately not responsible. You are a body, a single-person institution that has an administration, that has experienced people and other professionals within it, but in the end you are faced with all these complaints, and in the end this is all that is produced. People who look at this report from the outside say: "So, the mountain labored and brought forth a mouse? And this is a matter of perception. We cannot place this on the High Inspector of Justice. It belongs to the whole system, the justice system as a whole. We are facing almost a "Chronicle of a Death Foretold". All these things were said. Since we insist on learning things the hard way, by banging our heads against the wall, with around 200,000 cases in the backlog—the polite Albanian term is "a mountain of cases"—everyone loses; they no longer understand where they can find justice within that system. I do not know what the HIJ can do about this issue, but nevertheless it is absolutely necessary that, for better or worse, if the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council—in the end they are the ones who will decide—disagree with you, then you, on your part, should put that aspect under the greatest possible pressure. So, if their level of compliance is such that they prefer not to achieve results, you should do your part. Of course, part of the flawed solution is the fact that the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council have a very delicate balance between magistrate members and non-magistrate members. Six to five—the margin is very easy to cross, to be under Parliament's control, consequently under political control, rather than under the control of the professional corps. It is very simple. And afterwards, that can influence what the final decisions will be, including regarding your recommendations. We could talk endlessly about this issue, but I wanted to focus on those elements where you think you may be able to give me an answer. I would welcome it.

But I wanted to highlight one fact: we are 10 years later. It is true that reforms take years, but if we need another 10 years, and all of us have at most another 10 to 30 years of active professional life, people cannot wait indefinitely for a system to function, nor can they begin today thinking that they must leave as their inheritance the way a case will be resolved, or how it will eventually be resolved, because they themselves will never live to see the end of it, even though they are the complainants.
Thank you.

Chair of the Committee Ulsi Manja: Yes, thank you, Mr. Bylykbashi. Mr. Metani, you have the floor to respond to those points that you consider to be questions from Mr. Bylykbashi.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Mr. Bylykbashi, in fact, gave an overview both of public perception and of his personal views regarding the architecture and the situation in which the justice system finds itself today. There was also politics in it—not in the negative sense, but there was policymaking, there were constitutional issues, constitutional law, and there were personal opinions. So, it is difficult to summarize everything that he said, but on two or three points that I managed to retain, on some I agree with Mr. Bylykbashi, and on some I personally do not. For example, I think that the architecture of the justice system is the best that we could have designed, precisely for the separation and balancing of powers through the justice institutions. Many institutions were created, and perhaps this is where measures should have been taken, because those institutions needed to be staffed with people, but that is another issue from my point of view. I am speaking about the architecture in the constitutional sense. It is an architecture that does not allow any institution to become more powerful than another. Everyone oversees everyone else's work, and for me that is very important. Secondly, the situation, perhaps viewed from the outside, may appear as you described it—that, so to speak, the mountain labored and gave birth, from 1,600 complaints it produced 8 disciplinary proceedings. However, that is not the case. That is why I gave the presentation. First of all, 1,600 complaints were processed, they were verified. Verifying complaints means that 1,600 case files were reviewed, 1,600 letters were sent from the Office of the High Inspector of Justice to prosecutor X, Y, and Z, requesting their case files, informing them that they would be monitored, in accordance with the constitutional framework. On 1,600 occasions, prosecutors and judges have felt that their work is being reviewed. And for me, whether there will ultimately be grounds for a disciplinary investigation or subsequently for disciplinary proceedings depends on the available evidence and on the nature of the complaint. For me it is important—and this is also emphasized in the international reports—that we believe the system, or the mechanism, for reviewing the work of judges functions, because it also functions constitutionally. For me it is very important that the High Inspector of Justice, as a single-person institution, is a delicate institution which, in my opinion, requires a very high degree of democratic and policymaking maturity, not only in its relationship with Parliament but in relation to society as a whole, because it is an institution in which one person, one individual, has the authority to decide whether or not to initiate a disciplinary investigation. Surely you agree with me that a disciplinary investigation initiated because of public pressure, but contrary to the Constitution, becomes an instrument of intimidation against prosecutors and judges. And this is the important balance that we are trying to maintain, even at the cost of bearing criticism. Even regarding what you said, that the mountain labored and gave birth to a mouse, whereas in reality it is not so. Those are the numbers: 1,600 procedures.

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But I would like to share something with you, because this is the moment when I can speak freely, to tell the truth, because we are not doing politics here; these are also personal reflections that come from six years of experience. Look, every day we have debates with one another, individual emotions regarding a case. And when I speak about pressure, I do not necessarily mean political pressure, I do not necessarily mean media pressure, and so on. There is also pressure against oneself, but also pressure in the broader social sense of the word, regarding a case where you understand that you have no possibility to intervene because the Constitution does not allow you to, even though you know that the judge's or prosecutor's decision might have been different in nature. And this is the greatest guarantee that we are trying to provide to judges and prosecutors: that the High Inspector of Justice, delicate as an institution, is trying to preserve this important constitutional balance—not as a benefit for you judges and prosecutors, but so that you may feel free to exercise your duties, naturally free not only from politics, but also from other interests, financial interests, and so on. Consolidating this mentality within the judiciary is not only about exercising powers; it is also a matter of social maturity, something that judges will achieve over time, because it is a process, and here we are. To be a good judge, in my opinion, it is very difficult for judges to understand that they are judges 24 hours a day, not 8 hours a day. Being a judge or a prosecutor is a way of being, a way of thinking; it is not merely a profession. But that is something that I think, and perhaps you think, and perhaps all of us here think together, but not everyone thinks that way. Imposing this kind of mentality through disciplinary proceedings would produce the opposite result: it would turn the High Inspector of Justice into an instrument of intimidation. For me it would be very easy—and to be honest—that out of 8,000 complaints, there could have been 8,000 disciplinary investigations. Perhaps I would have achieved better public perception, but I would have turned the institution into an instrument of repression, not only for myself, but also for those who come after me. For me, standards are extremely important—not only for the work that we are establishing today, but also for those who may try to dismantle it tomorrow. And that is what I would like this committee to assess regarding the work carried out by the High Inspector of Justice. Because certainly, if we look at it only from the perspective of public opinion—you handled so many complaints, the battle is lost—since the situation does not speak in favor of the justice institutions, not because of their fault, or not necessarily because of their fault. We go and inspect judges and prosecutors for exceeding deadlines in issuing written decisions, and when we go there, we do not even have a place to sit because there is no space. There are files everywhere. And then, even from a human perspective, how can I initiate disciplinary proceedings when I can clearly see that the person simply does not have the human capacity to issue the written decision? How can I? I do not know. And this is what we are trying to do. If we see negligence on the part of a judge or prosecutor regarding delays in issuing written decisions, then we intervene firmly. We have referred a considerable number of magistrates for dismissal, even though the Councils concluded that dismissal was not warranted. But in no case have the Councils stated that the disciplinary proceedings themselves were unfounded. That sends a message to magistrates that these kinds of violations will have consequences. Can more be done? Yes, yes, yes, certainly more can be done. That is why, in 2022, I requested a greater role for Parliament. Yes, monitor our work, but we also need to talk. We need to share.

We need to coordinate with one another. And this committee, or another committee elsewhere, or another mechanism, could be the best instrument through which we could express these concerns—not in the sense of demanding accountability, because accountability is another process—but by sharing these concerns and discussing how we can help one another. Because everything begins with trust in one another: that the work you do here and the work they do there rests on a common foundation—honesty and respect for the law. Only that can move things forward, both in terms of cooperation among the justice institutions and in terms of cooperation between the justice institutions and Parliament. Yes, it is a very long issue, as you yourself also said.

Chair of the Committee Ulsi Manja: Yes, thank you, Mr. Metani.

Member of Parliament Oerd Bylykbashi: Please allow me to add one final point. I understand, and I agree, that the reason this kind of architecture was created was to establish checks and balances within the system. But it went beyond what was necessary.

The system is more divided and more balanced than it should be, thereby weakening its relationship with the other branch of government, namely the executive, and that has exposed it.

So, if you are an internal balancing element, I would spare—in no case would I sacrifice—the High Inspector of Justice, but I might sacrifice one of the two Councils: a single Council, one supreme body of magistrates, standing face to face, on equal footing, at the same constitutional level, and with the same institutional authority that a constitutional institution has, in relation to the other branch of government, whether Parliament or the executive, which has always been the major issue.

In that respect, this has also led to the situation where the administration is no longer afraid of the judiciary because nothing happens to it anymore; nothing comes back against it. It simply creates injustices.

Those injustices go to the judiciary, people complain, and the burden is placed on the justice system as well.

That is the logic I was referring to.

Thank you.

Chairman of the Commission Ulsi Manja: Are there any other questions? I have one question before I say a few words about the report, Mr. Metani. Do you publish the results of thematic and individual inspections on the official website of the High Inspector of Justice? And secondly, the large number of complaints that came out here, which has a relatively considerable number of carried-over complaints, but also new ones, and that Mrs. Bylykbashi said that it can also be taken as an indicator of increased trust in the High Inspector of Justice, but you can also look at it from the other point of view; the systemic problems. So, you can look at the increase in the number of complaints from both sides of the medal. I am curious to know, based on individual cases made public in the media that have to do with one of the causes of the complaints, which are delays in the reasoning of decisions, and I have also seen reasonings, decisions reasoned after such a long delay that even a judge would find it difficult to comprehend.

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What do they say, when you have inspected them? I am very curious to know, apart from the fact that they have no working conditions because they have nowhere to sit, that is also problematic for the system. What do they say when they are interviewed by your inspectors as to why a decision is reasoned with an 18-month delay or with a one-year delay, for example? It is reasoned that in order to pronounce it, they pronounce it on time; that much they do manage. I am very curious to know this, a justification, even a human one. Those are my two questions, then I will say a few words about the report.

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Well then, the website, that is, of the High Inspector of Justice, is very rich with the information that you mentioned. So, every completed thematic inspection is found on the website of the High Inspector of Justice, together with the recommendations, findings, and so on. Institutional inspections as well. Individual inspections are not found there, that is to say, the handling of individual complaints, because they are confidential, but as regards the complaint process, on the website of the High Inspector of Justice there is a mini-commentary, let me call it that, which guides citizens regarding the admissibility criteria and the types of decisions that the High Inspector of Justice issues, illustrated with models, in order to explain to citizens in which cases the complaint is admissible or, on the contrary, is archived. In any case, the website of the High Inspector of Justice has every piece of information that anyone needs to obtain from the institution without having the opportunity or the obligation to contact the Office of the High Inspector of Justice. I think that it is one of the most transparent websites that the justice institutions have, at least. Secondly, regarding the number of complaints, I also agree that the increase in the number of complaints does not necessarily indicate an increase in trust, nor does it necessarily indicate what you said, because on the other hand it may indicate that, due to the increase in the number of judges, the number of judicial proceedings also begins to increase, meaning that more complaints are produced. So it is very difficult to measure the reasons why the number of complaints increases, and we are not going to enter into that kind of reasoning. With regard to the drafting or the delays, to answer your question, one sentence is: workload. We are delayed in drafting decisions because there is workload, there is a heavy caseload, and so on. The distinction that we make is that we try to understand where there is a normal workload and where there is negligence, both in the planning of court hearings, in the conduct of judicial procedures or hearings, and in the delayed drafting of decisions by judges. And in those cases where we believe that there is negligence on the part of the magistrate, which undoubtedly has also brought discredit to the image of the judge or prosecutor, we have proceeded with disciplinary proceedings. For this reason, I also declared before this Commission two years ago about a thematic inspection that we conducted at the Tirana Court. This is precisely what I want to explain to you, the mechanism of how we function, how we try to analyze negligence and the real workload that judges and prosecutors have. At the Tirana Court we conducted an inspection, I believe two years ago, on the duration of the drafting of civil decisions for a four-month period, because we wanted to take a snapshot of that moment, so for four months what happened at the Tirana Court with this process, the process of drafting judicial decisions, and the results came out. We measured the number of judges at the court, the number of decisions that these judges drafted over a certain period of time, and according to that analysis it turned out that, for a certain period, the delay in drafting decisions started from day 21, that is, one day after the deadline provided by the Code had passed, up to 1,700 days.

The fundamental question is where you will start the investigation. Will you start the investigation for all judges who have gone beyond day 21 and thus end up putting all judges under investigation? But naturally you have to strike a balance, because even if you wanted to, you do not have enough inspectors to place all judges under investigation for exceeding the deadline for drafting judicial decisions by one day. And we made the analysis of how much time the majority of judges draft their decisions, and according to this it came out to 120 days. That is, the majority of judges, almost 90% of the judges of the Tirana Court, for the period of time that we measured, had drafted their decisions approximately 120 days after issuing the judicial decision. And we said that only for this period of time, for the judges whom we found beyond the 120-day deadline, that is, beyond the average deadline, we would refer them to disciplinary investigation, to see why they had drafted them with delay. Those who had drafted them within this period were within the logic that there had been a workload, because it was the majority of judges who had drafted their decisions. And after we carried out this investigation, we proceeded with disciplinary proceedings against judges. I am saying this to show how it functions, how we think, and how we try to approach the workload that judges have, but also in relation to the obligation that they have, because after all, citizens, I agree with Mr. Bylykbashi, citizens no longer want to know about the workloads that the system has or about the delays of the system. They want the judicial decision. Finding this balance is very difficult, and that is what we are trying to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman of the Committee Ulsi Manja: Yes, thank you, Mr. Metani. In fact, as you yourself said, this is the sixth year of your reporting before the Committee, but this time, unlike the previous reports, you have the Deputy High Inspector of Justice, who, after six years, was finally appointed. This too has been one of the problems in the implementation of the justice reform—the filling of a very important position in your institution, even though you are a monocratic institution. Now, we have had them here, and both the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council have reported, as has the Prosecutor General. On the 3rd, if I am not mistaken, we have also scheduled the head of SPAK, but no matter how you turn the problem around, no one is holding the “hot potato” of the real problems that the justice system has had during these ten years of implementing the reform. We are not holding it either—not even we, who have been elected by the people and who are members of this Committee and of the Assembly of Albania in order to address some of the concerns that the system has. We are not holding it, and I want to begin with the composition of the councils.

I do not think that politics has a hand in the non-magistrate members. I do not share that opinion, because if politics had a hand in it, we would have found a way long ago to elect the non-magistrate members as the Constitution and the law require. Instead, we have left it to the hand of God, and the non-magistrate members who are in the councils, whether in the High Prosecutorial Council or in the High Judicial Council, say: “We are here by the hand of God, by the lottery balls.”

Now, the issue is this: are the best candidates and the best capacities coming from the legal profession, from academia, and from civil society going to the councils? Certainly, the best capacities are not going there, and we have—not that I would say we have hesitated—we have refused to cooperate on this point in order to increase the capacities and the quality that the councils should have, because the prosecutors and the judges elect themselves.

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They have their own mechanism: six prosecutors and six judges elect themselves. But at least regarding the part that we send, for years—I do not know how many times the councils have been renewed; I think twice—in both cases they have been chosen by lot. And this is so true that, believe me, there are people who are in those councils who themselves cannot believe that they are there. They do not believe it. I do not want to dwell on a meeting we had not long ago in Durrës, among our three countries: Romania, as a member state of the European Union; Moldova, as a candidate country; and Albania, which is somewhat one step ahead; and among the respective councils—the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council of Moldova, and the Superior Council of Magistracy of Romania. It does not do us any honor when the representatives of these councils themselves say that they are there because God chose them, because the lottery ball picked them, instead of speaking honestly about the concerns that the system has, because the system unquestionably has concerns. And I want, since I began with myself, to say that first of all we too, when we speak about the system, should assume the responsibilities that belong to us—the responsibilities entrusted to us by the Constitution and the law, after all—because nobody is asking anyone to go into the courtroom. You said it, but it does not even need to be said that there is a lack of concrete and continuous cooperation among the institutions of the justice system. It is obvious. I know it from experience, but it is also obvious from the reports. If a joint meeting is held between the two councils, where the High Inspector of Justice, or the Prosecutor General, or the Minister of Justice is invited, that joint meeting—even if it is held only twice a year—is held because the recommendations of the Assembly’s Resolution have to be fulfilled, whereas in fact it is a legal obligation. But it does not matter whether you meet or not, because you can even meet five times a year formally. The issue is what you said: when the constitutional actors of the justice system meet, is there a real discussion and a real concern for the system? Is there discussion and accountability on the part of each actor in responding to the systemic problems and not only to the 140,000 backlog cases? This is a problem that we have today because of the well-known reasons related to the vetting process, to the shortage of judges and prosecutors in the system. But this cause too will disappear by the end of 2028. We will have 341 prosecutors and 408 judges. Although it was said here that there will never actually be 408 judges, because 25 of them, by operation of law, are in other institutions—they are in the High Judicial Council, in the High Prosecutorial Council, now I am speaking about both, they are in the High Inspector of Justice to complete that number that is there, they are seconded to the Ministry of Justice. So we have far fewer judges and prosecutors who actually handle cases in courtrooms. This cause too will disappear. But will the problem we have be solved? And I agree with you when you say that being a judge or a prosecutor is not an eight-hour job. It is a responsibility, a responsibility of a completely different level from other kinds of responsibilities, because you have been entrusted with the mission of delivering justice between two parties who have come to the court seeking a solution to a problem. But if the case that has come into your hands, the matter that has come into your hands for you to administer justice, you see it as something foreign, as something external, then the drafting of the judgment will take 17 months, and it will also take two years, because you do not care. And I am convinced—you carried out that thematic inspection at the Tirana Court—but I did not want to prolong it with questions, because within the files you reviewed, I am convinced that there are judges who, when they wanted to, drafted the judgment within the procedural deadline, and when they did not want to, they justified themselves with the workload and only started on the twenty-first day, and then it went on for as long as 17 months.

I also agree with you when you say: if we take this performance indicator of judges, we will dismiss all of them. But that is not the solution. What concerns me is why they draft some judgments on time while another part of the judgments they do not draft on time, because there is always a reason why. And once again, it comes back to conscience. Discipline at work—I have raised this issue even when I had the representatives of the Councils here. I agree that the Government must do its part regarding infrastructure, providing at least the minimum conditions for people to work, but today no one controls discipline at work. What is discipline at work like? Because it comes down to the response mechanism. The prosecution office is next to the court. The judge, when he has his hearings and a judicial panel has been formed, agrees there: they leave Monday and Tuesday, I will even give you Wednesday for your sake, and after Wednesday, until the following Monday comes around, there is no one there anymore. You only find the chief secretary of the court there. You may find the president of the court if he happens to live where he works, because now we have one large court and one large prosecution office, since everyone lives in Tirana. So, while judges and prosecutors should work like every other public official in this country, as you and your staff work eight hours a day from Monday to Friday, at least eight hours, because when there is a heavy workload the job has no schedule, but at a minimum, just as everyone else works, they too should work, because when you do not feel responsible, this is how matters have reached this point. These, too, are problems in themselves. And when they are asked how this issue should be resolved, they say: “Judges are independent.” Well, they are independent in the cases they hear, in the decisions they make and issue, but they are not independent from the law, nor from formal discipline at work. And when they are asked what we should do to address this problem, they say: “It is in the hands of the High Inspector of Justice.” Well then, if the High Inspector of Justice is the one who is responsible for accountability in the system, that is, for supervising the system, you have the decision-making authority. How are we going to solve this issue? Are you the government of the judiciary? Are you the government of the prosecution service? Do you manage the career system of these judges and prosecutors? Then how is it that, with such ease, when they compete for promotion to higher positions that become vacant, these kinds of concerns raised by the High Inspector of Justice, which are written right there in the inspections he has carried out, are not taken into consideration? So they see it as something external. When you ask them what the High Judicial Council or the High Prosecutorial Council is doing in the specific case, everyone washes their hands of it. And there is another concern that has been raised. “Mr. Inspector, here, regardless of the explanations that were given, it is a good thing that the issue of appointing heads of institutions has finally been resolved. Now the problem is that there are no candidates because everyone wants to come to Tirana. They go to the district prosecution offices or the district courts, and whoever meets the criteria to become a judge in the Court of Appeal or in a larger court, when the competition opens there, does not enter the competition to become the head, because everyone wants to come here, to Tirana.” Whereas I am not saying this to boast, but I come from the system. It used to be an honor to be a judge and a prosecutor, an honor for a lifetime. Another thing that concerns me is this: not everything can be solved through inspections or disciplinary measures. And how many years will it take before we reach the level of awareness that you are talking about? So there will come a moment of maturity for the councils and for the other institutions of the justice system as well. But when will this moment of maturity come? Because ten years have passed, and the cases are still there...

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They have only just begun studying. The High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council, taking into account the workload they have, the current number of judges and prosecutors, and the matrix for filling the vacancies by 2028, are carrying out a study on how many prosecutors and judges there should be once the vacancies created by the vetting process have been filled. I would invite you to become part of this discussion as well, and we will encourage you to become part of this discussion, because all the measurable indicators of the system need to be put to use in order to assess whether we should have a larger number of judges and prosecutors or whether we should not. And we should not base ourselves on the backlog. There are European CEPEJ standards established for this, but we have suggested the reallocation of human resources. For example, today the prosecution system has prosecution offices and courts with average or below-average workloads, while the Tirana Court and the Tirana Prosecution Office are operating at twice their capacity. Nevertheless, you should become part of this discussion because you have the data that result from the thematic inspections and the institutional inspections that you carry out. There is... and here I would like to make a suggestion, Mr. Inspector, and I did not ask the question by chance: do you publish the thematic inspections or do you not publish them? Because I know that you do publish both the thematic inspections and the institutional inspections, and I have seen them. I have also seen your website, just as I have read the international reports and the European Union progress reports that assess the work of the High Inspector of Justice. But perhaps, although I do not believe that the person who shouts the loudest is always the one who is right—I do not believe that—perhaps when they neither listen to your requests made in person before the High Judicial Council and the High Prosecutorial Council, nor to the reports published on your website, nor when you submit them to the Assembly, the time has come for you to institutionalize communication with the public, to convey to public opinion what you actually do, the work that you do, because the work is being done. As for whether others choose to present themselves with gimmicks, even when they have nothing to present and simply make noise for nothing—that is another matter. Mr. Bylykbashi says: “Sometimes you have to tear their skin as well.” That is true, because skin tears when there is nothing underneath. You can keep beating it as much as you like until the skin tears. Whereas you, the time has come for these results of the thematic inspections concerning the complaints you handle to be communicated to the people: here is the complaint, here is the inspection, here are the measures we have taken. Not that you have not done it already, but this creates the perception that some institutions, which supposedly shout louder, work more, while others that actually do the work and have chosen the institutional path of dealing with issues appear as though they are not working, even though the figures are there at the end of the day. The figures are there, the reports are there, the judges and prosecutors who have been inspected are there, the measures proposed to the councils are there, the councils’ decisions are there. I am not saying that the dismissal of a judge or a prosecutor should become the norm. The dismissal of a judge or a prosecutor is news in every democratic country in the world. It is not easy for a judge or a prosecutor to be dismissed. But at the very least, this work that is being done to put the system back on track should be made known. It is—and now the time has come! You have enough years behind you at the head of that institution that what you write, what you do, and what you submit to the Councils should also be heard by the public directly from you. Not that they have not heard it, but they need to hear it. Take a thematic inspection, go to the institutions, present it, because you deal with 3,700 complaints a year.

Why does everyone wash their hands of responsibility whenever something sensitive appears in public opinion, and then the High Inspector takes it into his hands? And when the Inspector, after one month or two months, presents the results of that inspection, people say: “Oh well, that issue has already passed now, because something else has happened. This one was nothing.” Oh, it was nothing, was it? So the inspectors went there, carried out the inspection, examined the files one by one, looked into all the problems. So this turns out to be something—but only when it happens. Once the matter has been clarified, it is no longer news. This is my suggestion, my own conclusion, which I have reached from all the hearings that I have listened to here. As for the problems you have, of course it is a shortcoming that there are vacancies in the number of inspectors. I hope they will be filled, but I do not think they are absolutely necessary or indispensable for the institution. Nor do I think that the work of the High Inspector of Justice has suffered because of the vacancies, because in the end you have sufficient supporting staff, and with the number of inspectors you currently have at your disposal you are able to respond to the challenges and the needs of the system. Having said all this, I am not saying that the rest of the system is black while the High Inspector of Justice is white, because the system has to be viewed in its entirety, from all 360 degrees. For my part, I have said it before, and here I agree with Mr. Bylykbashi. First of all, this is the level of councils that we have. I do not know how you see it. I am convinced that you too have viewed it with concern, just as we have. It is not good when the public is given messages through that level of debate and discussion within the constitutional institutions of the justice system, regardless of the nature of the debate. At the end of the day, colleagues debate among themselves, and especially lawyers debate among themselves, but the public should receive a different message from the institutions of the justice system. Then, if we go to what you said—that justice, the system, and when I speak about the system I mean the substance of the system, those who administer justice and those who investigate—if the magistrates produced by the School of Magistrates reflect the level of society, yes, of course they reflect it, but I know that being a judge is a profession of the elite of legal thought. Do you understand? And being a prosecutor as well, because society itself has its different strata. At least, that is how I have always understood it. There was an expression that we were told: “The law is a serious matter,” and we took this work seriously when we entered the justice system. That is how it should be. Now, if we have reached this point, we need to look much more deeply into where the defect lies. And here we return to where I began: starting with ourselves, including you, sitting together at one common table—not by looking at the problem as if it belongs to someone else, because that way we will solve nothing. The Parliament, the executive, and the judiciary should sit down and discuss: what are we going to do with the future of the system? Of course, the system we have today is not the one we had before. Much has changed because of the reform we carried out. We have some measurable indicators, especially regarding the specialized institutions for combating corruption and organized crime, but that is not the whole system. If those institutions handle around 700 cases a year—I do not have the exact figure now; I will look at it when they come here—the Prosecutor General told us here: “I have 66,000 cases a year, including decisions not to initiate proceedings, plus new cases.” Do you know what 66,000 criminal complaints submitted to the 13 prosecution offices of general jurisdiction mean? They are Albanian citizens—Albanian citizens who have turned to the prosecution service and who expect answers from that body of prosecutors, while we are looking at the issue from a very narrow angle.

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In any case, I apologize for speaking at such length, but you represent an institution which, when we designed the justice reform, we said would be: "The guarantee of the system, the guarantee of the system will be the High Inspector of Justice." That is why we took it outside the former High Council of Justice and outside the authority of the Minister of Justice. Because when we speak about the Minister of Justice, we should not look at matters through the justice reform. The Minister of Justice disclaims responsibility and says that he deals with the policies of the system, although I do not even know exactly what system policies he deals with. He gathers the statistics manually from here and there, publishes an annual statistical report, and represents and defends the budget of the justice institutions. In fact, those institutions negotiate it themselves with the Ministry of Finance, but this task has remained with the Minister of Justice—to defend it. This is the kind of discussion I am in favor of, this kind of discussion, because if you look at the reports, all the justice institutions that have submitted their reports to the Committee—the reports, from the point of view of methodology and the work reflected in the indicators, because the figures do not change. If you have carried out 10 inspections, then 10 inspections are what are written there. I cannot make them 11 or 12, but neither can I make them five. We receive the reports precisely so that we can put our finger on where the wounds of the system are. I expect this kind of cooperation and reflection at the same time, but without pointing the finger at where the guilty party is, because at the end of the day we are all responsible for where we have arrived. So am I, together with Mr. Bylykbashi, because I have been a member of the Justice Reform Committee from day one until today, now that I am the Chairman of the Committee on Legal Affairs. He less so, because he says: "I was involved up until the constitutional amendments and the SPAK law. After that," he says, "I wasn't involved." No, but do you understand? "I wasn't involved," he says. Well, you did touch it a little... how can you say you were not involved in all of it when you were involved in those two? In the end, we are even, because he raised his hand for the Constitution, and from there he opened the way for everything else. That is all I had, Mr. Inspector.

Member of Parliament Oerd Bylykbashi: *If you can, that is, not in percentages, but where do these complaints differ, and in the comment that you may make, if I understood the answer correctly, where does this entire volume of complaints differ? What is the problem that belongs to the judiciary—lack of capacity, laziness, if you like, etc.—and what is it that comes from outside? So, does this entire large number reflect the malfunctioning of everyone because the justice system is being overwhelmed by injustices that come from the way the state functions? So, where does this distinction lie?*

Chairman of the Committee Ulsi Manja: *Look, this would take us back to the beginning of the discussion once again. Look, they are written there. I looked at the typology of the complaints. If you look at them and divide the complaints into groups, that is, group together complaints of the same type, what Mr. Metani said is already known—these are the complaints. But of course, he did say that the infrastructure of the buildings is one of the... it is one indicator, and we too have acknowledged that there are clashes, that the citizen runs into obstacles when he goes to seek justice. But in any case, Mr. Metani, one final word before I thank you and close the meeting.*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: *First of all, thank you to the rapporteur for the work and for the understanding regarding the situation in which the Office of the High Inspector of Justice finds itself, the problems, the challenges, and the achievements*

it has had. I naturally also appreciate the support of the Committee, precisely for this kind of discussion that we need to have together. Secondly, just one answer for Mr. Bylykbashi. The issue is that this is a perception, and this is an analysis that we do not make. I may have my own opinions on this, and I certainly do have my own opinions, but I refrain from expressing them because they could then become political. And that is something that solves nothing. The situation in the justice system is what it is, but I would ask, with great humility, that we be extremely careful, first, in analyzing the system, and second, regarding the solutions and the choices we make in order to fix and change things. I would not like us to form opinions or make decisions because of the emotion of today's situation, and for that reason I very much agree with the roundtable that you are thinking of organizing. From day one, I have sought a much closer relationship, as High Inspector of Justice, with the Committee on Legal Affairs, or with anyone else, precisely to resolve these situations or to provide some guidance through ideas regarding the situation in which the justice system finds itself today, I have a different opinion. There are as many problems as you like, but very often the negative overshadows what is actually happening. The justice system we have today is not the one we had before. But now it has fallen to us to solve the problems that we have. At the very least, the system now has greater independence, and for me that is very important, because you mentioned that you removed the Office of the High Inspector of Justice from the institutions that could even have tainted the independence of magistrates, and you made it an independent institution. Precisely that, in my view, is the greatest achievement of the justice reform—that it created it as an independent institution. From my point of view, even though it may sound arrogant, it is an institution that is performing independently, precisely in accordance with the mission given to it by the Constitution and by you, who made that constitutional amendment, because very often this is taken for granted, whereas in fact it is not. It is perhaps one of the most difficult duties that any person can have—the duty of the High Inspector of Justice. I am not speaking about myself, because I already explained my own approach earlier, but he is the only person who has the authority to sign off on whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings against a magistrate. If such proceedings are initiated because of public pressure, that is, contrary to the Constitution, they become a means of blackmail against magistrates, which certainly serves neither the citizens nor the system. Regarding another point, I agree with you: there cannot be one institution that functions while others do not. Either we all function, or none of us functions; either we all deserve it, or none of us deserves it, because this is very important. And this is not simply related to the individual who heads the institution; it is related to the performance of the governing bodies in relation to the citizens. That is why I say that either all of us will perform, or none of us will perform. Regarding discipline at work among magistrates, in fact, about a year ago I had the same perception, and for that reason we conceived a thematic inspection precisely to examine the discipline at work of magistrates—not to interfere with their independence, as magistrates and the Councils often react, perhaps. It is very difficult to measure the eight-hour work discipline of a magistrate as a judge or as a prosecutor, for many reasons. But we launched a thematic inspection on the scheduling of court hearings and the conduct of court hearings in, I believe, nine or ten courts throughout the country, precisely to monitor the discipline of magistrates through the way they schedule court hearings and the way they follow that hearing schedule. This was done precisely to send magistrates, first of all, the message that discipline at work is monitored through a mechanism provided for by the Constitution and the law, without compromising or infringing upon their independence.

HIGH INSPECTOR OF JUSTICE NEWSLETTER

That thematic inspection has been completed; it is available on the website, and in any case we can make it available to you. We have issued a large number of recommendations, mainly addressed to the High Judicial Council, and of course we will monitor the implementation of those recommendations. So I would say that every concern that appears in public, we try to address. It does not always turn out exactly as it is perceived by the public, because the findings that emerged from this thematic inspection do not entirely support the perception that judges and prosecutors either have discipline at work or have no discipline at all. There are problems, and for that reason we have issued recommendations, but this is something that must be carefully balanced. I very much agree with the public role that the High Inspector of Justice should have in relation to the inspections carried out, not simply to highlight the work that has been done, because the work is there, just as you said. Whoever wants to see it will see it; whoever does not want to see it will not see it. You could even come out beating drums, so to speak. But that is not the concern.

Chairman of the Committee Ulsi Manja: *No, no, Mr. Inspector, I have a concern. When I made those suggestions, I think that those who see it and read it, but present it differently, should receive an answer, because that is my concern. That is why I say you should change your approach.*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: *Perhaps, but I am... look, perhaps you are...!*

Chairman of the Committee Ulsi Manja: *Even though you may tell me that those who do not want to read it as it is will never read it that way, even if you were to say it yourself... The issue is the relationship with the public.*

High Inspector of Justice Artur Metani: For me, it is important that the activity of institutions be transparent. That is, there is nothing that the High Inspector of Justice does that is not available on the website of the High Inspector of Justice, the website maintained by the Office of the High Inspector of Justice. From every thematic inspection to every activity and every audit carried out on the High Inspector of Justice, by the way, the Office of the High Inspector of Justice has been subjected to every possible audit by the Supreme State Audit, by the Ministry of Finance, by the Civil Service Commission, by every institution that supervises institutional activity, by the Directorate of Archives, by—I don't know, I can't remember all of them. And first of all, the audits themselves are on the website, and none of the audits has identified any problems in the activity of the institution of the High Inspector of Justice, which for me is fundamental, because the High Inspector of Justice is not only a justice institution; first and foremost, it is a public institution. It also has a performance as a public institution. Secondly, with regard to the substance of the work of the High Inspector of Justice, there is also on the website an inspection carried out by the Spanish Judicial Council, by experts, by inspectors of the Spanish Judicial Council, regarding the disciplinary proceedings conducted by the High Inspector of Justice. They examined all the disciplinary proceedings carried out by the High Inspector of Justice, analyzed them, and came up with two recommendations: first, that the High Inspector of Justice's investigative reports in disciplinary proceedings are too lengthy and therefore should be shorter; and second, that the type of sanctions requested is related to the independence of judges. They observed that salary reductions should not be requested as a disciplinary measure because they also affect the judge's family. So, what I want to say is that the institution is supervised at every stage, at every moment, by everyone who has the authority to supervise the High Inspector of Justice,

and all of this is available on the website. Now, as for making this more public, perhaps you are right. I have never wanted to play that role, because it is not the role of the High Inspector of Justice to go around telling people what he has done while others have their own problems, because we too have our own problems, undoubtedly. We too have many things that need to be improved, because the dynamics of the issues we encounter require us to be flexible in changing our work methodology, our working practices, and our prompt response to events that occur. But all of these are part of a balance that we maintain every day. For example, it is true that the number of inspectors has not increased—they are the same inspectors—but the number of thematic inspections has increased. The question is: how is that possible? It is because the professionalism of the inspectors, their training, and the experience they gain make them more capable of carrying out the thematic inspections that the institution needs. So, in other words, one must look at the institution's dynamics and development. But as for making this more public, we gladly accept it as a suggestion, and personally I will discuss it with my colleagues. My hesitation has always been that I would not want to create the impression that one institution stands apart, because I believe that either all institutions stand together, or none of them do. That has always been my dilemma. Thanking you once again for your understanding, I have made this invitation many times before, and I will make it again. I would like the members of this Committee to come and meet the inspectors themselves at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, so that they may perhaps also see the dedication and commitment that they have.

Chairman of the Committee Ulsi Manja: *No, thank you very much, Mr. Metani, also for the invitation to come and see for ourselves. Why not have a visit to the institution that you lead? To tell the truth, as a Committee, because we have been overwhelmed with work here, even though we have the authority to carry out parliamentary monitoring and oversight, perhaps we should begin by doing so with your institution. We will come with pleasure. I would like to thank you today for your report. I would also ask Ms. Bylykbashi that, in the draft resolution we will prepare for Mr. Metani's institution for the year 2026, we reflect some of the issues and concerns that emerged during today's reporting. Then, I believe that by July 3, on Friday, we will have the draft resolution ready so that we can adopt it. After that, the work will continue in the Committee on Initiatives, where you will report on the implementation of last year's resolution, even though it was adopted almost at the end of the year, and on the recommendations that may have resulted from the periodic monitoring and that should become part of the final text of the draft resolution that will be submitted to the Assembly of Albania. I would like to thank you for the work that you do, and I join in everything that was said during this Committee meeting, looking at the justice system as a whole—its achievements, its challenges, and also its problems—as a shared concern. Only in this way can we solve them. Otherwise, if each of us starts looking only at our own part, I am convinced that we will accomplish nothing, except that the problem will remain there without an answer and without a solution. I would also like to thank my fellow Members of Parliament for today's long working day, and we will continue. We still have an even longer day ahead, because we also have a plenary session. I would also like to thank the staff of the Assembly, who make it possible for us to hold these meetings and ensure that our meetings proceed normally, as well as the public, who I am convinced follow the reports of the justice institutions with great interest. We know this from the surveys we have regarding the reporting of your institutions. The justice system in particular is a very sensitive branch of government. Thank you very much, and have a good day, everyone.*



VOICE OF THE INTERNS:



Rosela Hida is a third-year Bachelor's student at the University of Law, driven by a strong passion for the study of law and its direct impact on individuals and society as a whole. During her academic journey, she has diligently pursued courses that have deepened her interest in the legal system, significantly improving her understanding of the many ways in which the law is shaped and affects everyday life. Beyond her theoretical preparation, Rosela has had the privilege of gaining valuable practical experience through placements at a Crown Court and three well-established law firms in London. These important opportunities have provided her with a deeper understanding of the practical operation of the justice system, strengthened her professional communication and teamwork skills, and fostered the development of a strong and unwavering work ethic.

1. What motivated you to choose the Office of the High Inspector of Justice to complete your internship?

I chose the Office of the High Inspector of Justice to complete my professional internship because I consider the institution as being one of the most prestigious and important establishments within the Albanian justice system. Its role in ensuring integrity, accountability, and the proper functioning of the judicial system makes it a particularly valuable institution for the professional development of a law student.

Moreover, completing my internship at this institution afforded me the opportunity to gain first-hand insight into the operation of the Albanian judicial system, including its administrative and disciplinary procedures and the practical application of legal principles. Working within such a distinguished institution enabled me to bridge the gap between academic study and legal practice, while further developing my analytical, professional, and practical legal skills. I believe this experience has significantly enhanced my understanding of the Albanian legal framework and has reinforced my commitment to pursuing a career in the legal profession, while equipping me with invaluable knowledge and experience for my future professional development.

2. What was your first impression when you started your internship?

When I started my internship, my initial impression of the institution was highly positive, as I was warmly welcomed by the staff, whose supportive and approachable manner immediately made me feel included within the working environment. From the outset, I observed a professional, well-structured, and highly organised workplace, where clear communication, mutual respect, and effective collaboration between colleagues were evident in the daily functioning of the institution. This positive and encouraging atmosphere not only reinforced my motivation but also inspired me to become more actively engaged in the tasks assigned to me, approach my responsibilities with greater diligence, and fully commit to making the most of the experience, both in terms of professional development and in gaining a deeper understanding of the institution's role within the justice system.

3. Was there a particular moment or task that impressed you the most?

One of the moments that impressed me the most was observing a complaint submitted by a citizen who expressed her concerns regarding an issue related to the justice system. This experience helped me better understand the importance of the Office of the High Inspector of Justice in listening to, assessing, and addressing citizens' complaints, as well as its role in strengthening public trust in the justice system.

4. What will you take with you from this experience?

From this experience, I will carry forward a far deeper and more practically grounded understanding of the Albanian legal system and the day-to-day functioning of justice institutions. Beyond the theoretical knowledge acquired through my studies, this internship has allowed me to observe how legal principles are applied in practice,

thereby bridging the gap between academic learning and institutional reality. It has also provided me with meaningful professional exposure within a formal judicial environment, strengthening my analytical and critical thinking abilities. Equally importantly, it has reinforced my appreciation of the fundamental importance of professionalism, ethical conduct, discretion, and a strong sense of responsibility in the legal profession, all of which I recognise as essential qualities for my future career development.

5. What was the most interesting aspect of this experience for you?

The most interesting aspect of this experience for me was observing first-hand the handling of a complaint submitted by a citizen who expressed her concerns regarding a matter connected to the justice system. This exposure provided me with a more profound understanding of the Office of the High Inspector of Justice and its fundamental function in systematically receiving, scrutinising, and adjudicating public grievances in an impartial and methodical manner. It further highlighted the institution's wider constitutional significance in upholding judicial accountability and enhancing public confidence in the integrity and transparency of the justice system.

6. What did you learn during your time at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice that you did not know before?

During my time at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, I learned more about the functioning of the Albanian legal system, legal procedures, and the role of justice institutions-areas in which I previously had limited practical knowledge. This experience helped me better understand the practical implementation of the law and the importance of the High Inspector of Justice's role in ensuring integrity and accountability within the justice system. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to gain this knowledge in such a prestigious institution as the Office of the High Inspector of Justice.

7. How would you describe the working atmosphere at the institution in a few words?

The working atmosphere at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice was very positive and professional. From the beginning of my internship, I was welcomed by the staff, who were willing to support me and include me in the working environment. There was a clear culture of cooperation, mutual respect, and open communication among colleagues, which contributed to a positive, disciplined, and motivating atmosphere conducive to learning and professional development.

8. What message would you give to other students or young people who wish to pursue a professional internship in justice institutions, particularly at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice?

The message I would give to other students who wish to complete a professional internship in justice institutions, particularly at the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, is to take advantage of this opportunity with commitment and dedication. Practical experience helps students connect the theoretical knowledge gained at university with its application in real professional settings. Only through involvement in a professional environment can students gain a better understanding of how the legal system operates and develop the skills necessary for a successful career in the field of law.





While assisting the complainants

The team of complaints office welcomes citizens-complainants every working day from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm, while for increased communication with interested citizens, in addition to communication through the website and official address.

The Office of the High Inspector of Justice has made available the phone number +355 4 2217217. Coordinator for the right to information is part of this sector.



PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF DECISIONS

Even during the month of **July 2026**, the Office of the High Inspector of Justice made public announcements of archiving decisions for **7 complainants**, who were unreachable at the addresses communicated by them. In addition to the stands of the HIJ, according to the law, these announcements are also found on our official website and posted in the stands of the municipalities where the complainants come from.



COORDINATOR FOR THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

In accordance with the principles and rules provided for in law no. 119/2014 "On the right to information", the coordinator for the right to information in the Office of the High Inspector of Justice, enables every applicant the right to be familiar with public information, as well as communicates according to the need with the applicant regarding the processing of the request for public information.

Requests for information are filed by citizens, legal entities, interested groups, and can be sent through the "Albanian Post", e-mail at the address: **info@ild.al**, as well as the e-mail of the coordinator for the right to information: **elis.kuci@ild.al**

The information provided in the transparency program is published and continuously updated in the register of requests and responses, within the legal deadline.

*During **July 2026**, at the Office of High Inspector of Justice, **13 requests** for information were received, which were processed in all cases within 5 days (the law provides that a response must be return to the applicant within 10 days).*

HIJ IN TWITTER

High Inspector of Justice...
@HIJ_Albania

Report on the Rule of Law 2026 by the High Inspector of Justice. #HIJ 🇪🇺
#EuropeanCommission 🇪🇺 #report 📄

**REPORT ON THE RULE OF LAW 2026
CHAPTER ON DEVELOPMENTS
IN THE FIELD OF THE RULE OF LAW**

The High Inspector of Justice continued to be fully operational, with an increased number of temporary judges inspectors. In 2025, the High Inspector of Justice registered 1,792 cases, of which 1,633 were completed. Currently, there are 10 out of 20 inspector positions filled.

A significant increase has been observed in the number of requests for disciplinary proceedings against judges inspectors (from 13 to 50 years). Magistrates are increasingly being held accountable for their decisions and the number of requests against inspector decisions has decreased as a result of the improvement of the investigation and reasoning of decisions.

In 2025, the HIJ did not request the initiation of any disciplinary proceedings against magistrates. Three judges were dismissed and one prosecutor, as a result of the final court decision.

The High Inspector of Justice adopted a new methodology for the control and selection of cases, which improved the efficiency of the work process in accordance with international standards and increased transparency through the reasoned verification (vetting) procedure and the regular publication of results.

High Inspector of Justice

Brussels, 17.7.2026
1910/2026/129 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT
2026 Rule of Law Report
Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Albania

Accompanying the document
Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

2026 Rule of Law Report
The rule of law situation in the European Union

(2016/2026) 900 final - (2016/2026) 901 final - (2016/2026) 902 final -
(2016/2026) 903 final - (2016/2026) 904 final - (2016/2026) 905 final -
(2016/2026) 906 final - (2016/2026) 907 final - (2016/2026) 908 final -
(2016/2026) 909 final - (2016/2026) 910 final - (2016/2026) 911 final -
(2016/2026) 912 final - (2016/2026) 913 final - (2016/2026) 914 final -
(2016/2026) 915 final - (2016/2026) 916 final - (2016/2026) 917 final -
(2016/2026) 918 final - (2016/2026) 919 final - (2016/2026) 920 final -
(2016/2026) 921 final - (2016/2026) 922 final - (2016/2026) 923 final -
(2016/2026) 924 final - (2016/2026) 925 final - (2016/2026) 926 final -
(2016/2026) 927 final - (2016/2026) 928 final - (2016/2026) 929 final -
(2016/2026) 930 final - (2016/2026) 931 final

High Inspector of Justice...
@HIJ_Albania

Weekly Complaint Processing at #HIJ 📄

- ✓ 9,443 confirmed complaints
- ✓ 7,035 processed complaints
- ✓ 2,408 complaints currently under review
- ✓ 208 complaints in the verification process
- ✓ 150 investigated magistrates
- ✓ 56 requests for disciplinary proceedings

? Have you had any experience with us? Share your feedback with us 📄
hij.gov.al/surveys/complaints/

HIGH INSPECTOR OF JUSTICE

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9,443+ Confirmed Complaints	7,035 Processed Complaints	2,408 Complaints in the review process	150 Investigated magistrates
		208 Complaints in the verification process after the initial review	56 Requests for disciplinary proceedings

This information is updated every monday

High Inspector of Justice...
@ILD_Albania

Weekly Complaint Processing at #HIJ 📄

- ✓ 9,381 confirmed complaints
- ✓ 6,990 complaints processed
- ✓ 2,391 complaints currently under review
- ✓ 196 complaints in the verification process
- ✓ 150 magistrates investigated
- ✓ 55 requests for disciplinary proceedings

? Have you had any experience with us? Share your feedback with us. 📄
hij.gov.al/surveys/complaints/

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		196 Complaints in the verification process after the initial review	55 Requests for disciplinary proceedings

This information is updated every Monday

Inspektori i Larte i Drejtesise Artur...
@ILD_Albania

Today at the Committee on Citizen Initiatives, Cooperation and Institutional Oversight to discuss about the Assembly's 2025 resolution. #HIJ 📄
ild.al/en/2026/07/07/...

Inspektori i Larte i Drejtesise Artur...
@ILD_Albania

Good meeting with the Prosecutor General at the Supreme Court of the 🇳🇱 Edwin Bleichrodt. We exchanged experiences on judicial accountability&inspection. My appreciation to Ambassador @ReinoutVos for his dedicated support to Albania's justice institutions.
ild.al/en/2026/07/15/...

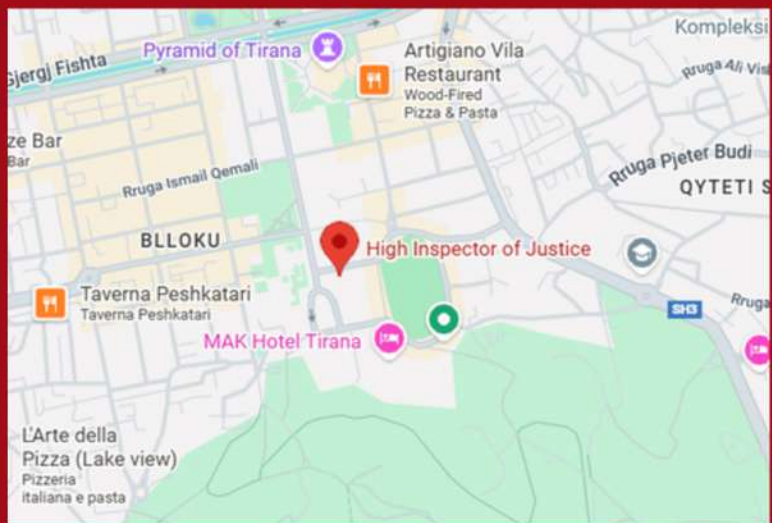
July 2026

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Spot prezantues ILD
Prezantimi i Inspektorit të Lartë të Drejtësisë
[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)



Më skano!