

Judiciaries in Peril: Romania

Central & Eastern
European Judicial
Exchange Network

8 March 2021,
3pm CET

SPOTLIGHT #4

Monday
8 March 2021,
3pm CET
(80 minutes)

Part 1: Presentations
(55 minutes)

Part 2: Q&A
(25 minutes)

TOPIC:

Judiciary in Peril:
Romania
Case Study

OVERVIEW

The next episode in our Spotlight Webinar Series on “Judiciaries in Peril in Central & Eastern Europe” will focus on the Romanian judiciary. This series is part of the CEELI Institute’s ongoing Central and East European Judicial Exchange Network, and brings together judges with a wider community civil society organizations to shine a light on pressing issues challenging judiciaries, which deserve broad public attention. Previous episodes have focused on Bulgaria, Poland, and Montenegro.

Each session addresses the following themes: How is the judiciary in peril and how is it being undermined? What are the underlying circumstances? What constitutes a threat to judicial independence? What are the trends relating to judicial independence? Are there any solutions or remedies?

In this fourth webinar session, we will shine a spotlight on the judiciary in Romania, outlining the challenges being faced there. The conversation will be led by Laura Ștefan, Executive Director of Expert Forum, Chairperson of the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative Secretariat, and a former director in the Romanian Ministry of Justice; Ramona Strugariu, Member of the European Parliament; and Judge Andrea Chiș, Judge at Cluj Appellate Court, and member of the Romanian Superior Council of Magistracy.

The Spotlight series will be held via Zoom with simultaneous translation available in English and Romanian.

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SPEAKERS:



Judge Andrea Chiș

Judge at Cluj Appellate Court, member of the Romanian Superior Council of Magistracy



Ramona Strugariu

Member of the European Parliament



Laura Ștefan

Executive Director
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The Romanian judiciary has gone through major turmoil in the past years. Controversial legislation bringing into question judicial independence has been adopted on short notice without any meaningful consultation with stakeholders. Street protests and reactions coming from within the judiciary prompted criticism from the European Commission, GRECO, and the Venice Commission. While some of the most harmful legal proposals have been dropped, others made their way through the Parliament and have now entered in effect. The years to come place a serious challenge before political decision makers who face regular prompts from the European Commission to address shortcomings identified in areas such as judicial reform and fighting corruption. These are part of the EU ‘Cooperation and Verification Mechanism’ agreed at accession in 2007 and which successive Governments have been keen to bring to an end without necessarily following through with recommended reforms. In addition, significant challenges remain for Romania regarding how to rebuild the trust between state powers and foster a judiciary that is independent, reliable, efficient, and accountable.

CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPEAN JUDICIAL EXCHANGE NETWORK

The Judicial Network, which began in 2012, is comprised of rising judges from eighteen countries who gather regularly to share best practices on issues of judicial independence, integrity, accountability, and court management. As international in-person meetings are likely to be limited for some time to come, the Spotlight Series ensures that the Network can continue to meet its mandate to improve judicial integrity and court efficiency in Central and Eastern Europe, despite the global lockdowns resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.