

and predictability of the legislative process regarding the legislation on judicial reform", and to take the opinion of the body of magistrates seriously into consideration.

In the November 2017 report of the European Commission on the CVM, it reiterated and emphasized the idea that "the capacity of the Government and the Parliament to ensure an open, transparent, and constructive legislative process regarding the laws of justice will be essential".

However, the law of magistrates' service pensions is an integral part of their status and is precisely regulated by the laws of justice.

It is unacceptable and outrageous that now the European Commission not only endorses but actively participates in hidden negotiations with political parties regarding the status of magistrates.

We demand that the European Commission takes full responsibility for the disastrous situation in which the judicial system currently finds itself, facing a severe human resources crisis, and immediately halt this so-called "reform".

Any substantial modification to the status of magistrates should be made under conditions of stability in the system, especially when it comes to human resources, the stability, and attractiveness of a judicial career.

Currently, however, **the justice system is facing the most severe and prolonged personnel crisis since Romania joined the European Union.** In the past five years, there has been a true exodus of magistrates, coupled with a noticeable decrease in the number of well-prepared law graduates willing to enter the judicial system.

The reason for this unprecedented crisis is precisely the instability of the magistrates' status, including the perpetual threat of abolishing the service pension, and the blow dealt now with the support and direct initiative of the European Commission will throw the judiciary into chaos.

We remind the European Commission that there are already 1,129 vacant judge positions, and the courts are operating with a severe deficit of personnel, with the additional workload being taken on by active judges. The situation is equally grave in the prosecution offices, where the deficit of prosecutors is 861.

At the same time, interest in a judicial career has consistently declined in recent years. For example, in 2022, out of 580 positions offered to be filled, 141 remained unfilled, even though the required admission grade to become a magistrate dropped to a six out of ten from eight out of ten in the recent years.

In conclusion, we firmly demand that the European Commission urge the Romanian Government to suspend any legislative measures related to service pensions. These matters should be reconsidered under conditions of normality and stability regarding human resources, with the loyal consultation of the judicial authority by the government and parliament within these procedures.

Nevertheless, we demand that the European Commission acknowledge the fact that negotiating our status with Romanian political parties without properly consulting the courts, the prosecutor's offices and the professional associations of magistrates signifies an unacceptable disregard of the independence of the judiciary in Romania. Our independence should not be used as bargaining chip in the negotiations with the Romanian Government.

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