



MEDEL was informed of a recent legislative change that established a new method for determining the starting salary of Bulgarian judges and prosecutors.

As we have previously noted, the financial independence of judges is an essential guarantee of their independence and of the proper functioning of the judiciary as a whole; therefore, manipulating the indices for judicial salaries could undermine this independence¹.

From publicly available information on the legislative process, it is clear that the amendment was adopted as a transitional provision of the Annual State Budget Act, without a convincing justification and without taking into account the objections raised by the Bulgarian judicial authorities, by the Bulgarian Judges Association, and by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers².

With this legislative change, the previously existing objective benchmark for determining the salaries of junior Bulgarian magistrates has been replaced by a link to the salaries of members of parliament. In this way, the salaries of judges and prosecutors in Bulgaria are made dependent on the decisions of the parliamentary majority, which is contrary to European and international standards, as well as to the requirements established in the rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights.

Apart from the dependency created by politically motivated decisions regarding the salaries of Bulgarian magistrates, there is also the possibility that these salaries may be reduced in the future, given the change in the basis on which they are determined.

Based on the foregoing, MEDEL calls on the competent Bulgarian authorities to:

- take the necessary steps to reconsider the legislative decision linking the remuneration of junior magistrates—and, accordingly, the salaries of judges and prosecutors in higher courts—to the salaries of members of Parliament;
- start a dialogue with all stakeholders, to find a solution for determining the amount of judicial remuneration based on a transparent and stable mechanism that complies with generally accepted standards for ensuring the financial independence of the judiciary.

15.9.26

¹ <https://medelnet.eu/medel-statement-on-judicial-independence-and-financial-security/>

²² <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=31148>