

2023 EU Justice Scoreboard: Focus on Fighting Corruption



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News

On 8 June 2023, the Commission published the [2023 EU Justice Scoreboard](#), which provides an overview on the effective functioning of the Member States' judicial systems by providing objective, reliable, and comparable data for the year 2022. The 11th edition of the EU Justice Scoreboard (for the 2022 Scoreboard → [euclid 2/2022, 86-87](#)) provides data on three key elements of effective national judicial systems: efficiency, quality, and independence.

This edition focused on strengthening the economic dimension of these three aspects by including new data on efficiency in the fight against corruption. The 2023 Scoreboard also shows how judicial systems have begun to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic as regards their efficiency. The key findings can be summarised as follows:

Efficiency

- In general, the data from 2012 to 2021 for civil, commercial, and administrative cases show positive trends in most cases. The decrease in efficiency, quality, and independence observed in 2020 was probably due to the COVID-19 pandemic and seems to be over thanks to the different types of hybrid or online working arrangements now in place.
- Since 2012, the duration of first-instance judicial proceedings has decreased in 12 Member States. For cases of money laundering, the average duration of first-instance proceedings is up to one year in 15 Member States, up to two years in seven Member States, and up to 3.5 years in two Member States. For corruption cases, the average duration of the trial is about one year in 12 Member States and up to about four years in the remaining five Member States for which data are available.

Quality

- 21 Member States require that parties pay a court fee at the beginning of the court procedure. In six Member States (Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, and Slovenia), recipients of legal aid are not automatically exempt from paying court fees.
- Continuing the work of the 2022 EU Justice Scoreboard, which presented a separate figure on special measures facilitating equal access to justice for persons with disabilities, the 2023 edition takes a more in-depth look by focusing on two groups: the elderly and victims of violence against women/ domestic violence. The figures show that 17 Member States provide information on the rights of persons at risk of discrimination, and 22 Member States provide easy physical access to court build-

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ings. Nine Member States have taken steps to make legal aid more accessible to the elderly when needed.

- For the first time, the Scoreboard shows a selection of specific measures for victims of violence against women/domestic violence. In 12 Member States, all safeguards are in place, but almost a quarter of Member States do not provide online access to specific information on prevention, support, and protection services for victims of domestic violence or to legal information on violence against women/domestic violence and victims' rights.
- In 20 Member States, less than 50% of judges at the highest court level are women.
- More Member States are providing online information about their judicial systems, and online access to court judgments has also improved slightly overall compared to 2021, particularly as regards the publication of judgments of first-instance and second-instance courts.

Judicial independence

- The general public's perception of judicial independence has improved in 15 Member States compared to 2016. Compared to last year, companies' perception of judicial independence decreased in 13 Member States. For both the general public and companies, the main reason for the perceived lack of independence has been interference or pressure from the government and from politicians.

New focus: Combating corruption

The inclusion of data on anti-corruption proceedings follows the adoption of the anti-corruption package, including a proposal for a Directive on combating corruption by criminal law on 3 May 2023 (→ [news item of 3 August 2023](#)). The proposal for the Directive updates and harmonises EU rules on the definition of corruption offences, covering the full range of corruption offences (i.e., bribery, misappropriation, trading in influence, abuse of function, obstruction of justice). Therefore, for the first time, the 2023 EU Justice Scoreboard provides data on specialised anti-corruption bodies, giving an overview of the nature of their powers and the rules governing their appointment. In cooperation with Member States, a new questionnaire has also been developed to collect data on the duration of court proceedings before first-instance courts in bribery cases.

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