

CENTER FOR TRANSPARENCY AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Justice System: Policies for Improving its budget management

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the European Union

PUBLISHER

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YEAR OF PUBLICATION:

October 2025

This publication was funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of Center for Transparency and Freedom of Information (CTFI) and its authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

The action "Building Partnership on Fundamentals: Empowering CSOs for the EU accession process", is being implemented by the European Movement in Albania, with the financial support of the European Union - IPA Civil Society Facility 2021, and in cooperation with the Academy of European Integration and Negotiations (AIEN), Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA) and the Center for Transparency and Freedom of Information (CTFI).



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Introduction to budget management in the new Justice system

Before the Justice Reform of 2016, the budget management of the Justice system was carried out by a budget administration office, reporting to a board headed by the chairperson of the Supreme Court. The Justice Reform was approved in July 2016 by unanimous voting in Albania's Parliament. At the core of the Justice Reform was the adoption by Albania's Parliament of constitutional amendments on 21 July 2016, where out of 26 articles of the Albanian Constitution pertaining to the justice system, the Reform amended 21 of them and at least 23 new points were added in the Constitution.

The justice reform has brought about a profound institutional transformation in Albania, creating a new architecture of the judicial and prosecution system. In addition to the legal dimension, one of the main challenges is budget management, which determines how functional and effective this system is. Budget management is not limited only within the justice institutions, but is influenced by a number of internal and external institutions, such as:

- The Parliament - has a central role in approving the annual budget for the justice institutions. Through the Laws Committee and the Economy and Finance Committee, it exercises political control over the budget requests. Often, the Parliament's decisions reflect compromises between the need for judicial independence and the fiscal constraints of the government.

- The Ministry of Finance - It is the technical institution that prepares the draft budget and sets expenditure ceilings. It directly influences the way in which funds are distributed among the new justice institutions. It has the power to limit or review budgetary requests, indirectly affecting the institutional independence of the new judiciary.
- The High Judicial Council (KLGJ) - It is practically the "government" of the courts. It is responsible for the administration of the judiciary and the management of funds dedicated to the courts. It drafts budgetary requests for the courts and submits them to the Parliament for approval. It decides on the allocation of funds for the courts of first instance, courts of appeal and the High Court.
- The High Prosecution Council (KLP) - It administers funds for the prosecution of first instance and of appeal. It provides resources for the functioning of the ordinary prosecution structures. Through its decisions, it influences the financial priorities of the prosecution.
- The Special Prosecution Office Against Corruption and Organized Crime (SPAK) - It has budgetary autonomy and benefits from considerable funds, due to its role in the fight against corruption and organized crime. It influences the management of the overall budget through high financial requirements for complex investigations and protection of prosecutors.

- The National Bureau of Investigation (BKH) - It is an investigative structure subordinate to SPAK, with specific requirements for technology, training and security. Its budget is part of the new justice expenditures and influences the distribution of funds.
- The High Inspector of Justice (ILD) - It is an independent institution controlled by the Parliament that oversees the discipline of judges and prosecutors. It has a role in budget management through requirements for sufficient funds for inspections and disciplinary investigations.
- The Supreme State Audit Office (KLSH) - It conducts audits on the use of public funds in the justice system. KLSH reports help identify mismanagement, abuses or ineffective spending.
- International partners and donors - The EU, the US, Council of Europe and other international organizations have provided financial assistance for the implementation of justice reform. They indirectly influence budget management through conditions imposed on the use of funds.

In general, budget management in the new justice system is a complex process that involves independent institutions, constitutional bodies, and executive and international actors. The main challenge remains the balance between the independence of justice institutions and the constraints imposed by the Government's fiscal policy. Only clear coordination and greater financial transparency can guarantee that funds actually serve to strengthen justice and not to increase institutional tensions.

The 2024 budget situation and the scope of the second policy paper

The period 2017-2024 has marked a continuous increase in the budget for the justice sector, reflecting the needs for the creation and functioning of new institutions.

The 2024 Justice System budget situation

According to data from the Ministry of Finance, in 2017, spending on justice represented around 0.8% of GDP, while in 2024 this level has reached approximately 1.1% of GDP. In absolute terms, the Justice system budget for 2024 was approximately 17.5 Euro/capita, while the average for EU countries with a GDP in the region of 10,000 Euro per inhabitant is 28.3 Euro/capita.

This means that despite the increase in the judicial budget, Albania is still far from the average expenditure on the judiciary in EU countries. Spending has been mainly focused on building institutional capacities, salaries and training of new staff, as well as infrastructure (new buildings and digital technology). SPAK and BKH have received a significant portion of the funds, due to their specialized nature and the need for modern investigative equipment. For 2024 alone, SPAK's budget marks an increase of over 15% compared to the previous year, while the approved 2025 budget for SPAK is 1.1 million Euro larger than that of 2024. The Constitutional Court and the High Court have

also received additional funds to improve their infrastructure and digitalize their services. Meanwhile, the School of Magistrates has also received increased funding to improve the training capacities of new magistrates, necessary to fill the gaps created by the vetting process.

In the 2024 budget and in the first part of the 2025 budget execution, a significant portion of funds has been dedicated to (i) the implementation of electronic court case management systems (ICMIS), (ii) the creation of integrated investigative and public transparency databases, and (iii) investments in IT infrastructure for new justice bodies.

The scope of the policy paper

By acknowledging in full the progress described above, this policy paper is prepared to identify the main budget constraints and problems of the Justice system for the year 2024 and the first six months of 2025. Its main objectives are to provide the reasons that brought to such constraints and to propose adequate solutions to the identified major problems. It also looks at how the new Justice System has addressed the main budget problems identified in the Policy Paper 2023.

The paper contains an analysis of the principal problem observed during budget execution in 2024 and the first half of 2025, as well as an analysis of other important constraints. It provides recommendations to potential solutions for the main problems observed and conclusions on how to address budgetary issues in the future.

What happened with the budget constraints identified for 2023?

- The main budget constraint for 2023 was the delayed office space investment, although the KLGJ and SPAK have tried to reflect their necessities for office space investments in the medium-term budget plan 2024-2026, as contained in the Policy Paper 2023¹, with KLGJ requiring 5.6 million Euro for that kind of investment and SPAK requesting 2.1 million Euro.

During 2024 and first half of 2025, this problem was partially addressed by the Ministry of Finance. As the head of KLGJ Department of Budget and Finance, Mr. Xhevdet Haxhiu put it on the roundtable organized by the Center for Transparency and Free Information in Lushnje town with court representatives, lawyers, local media and local civil society activists on March 10, 2025, “The funding that the KLGJ has received from the Parliament for 2025 is approximately 20 million Euro less than the request, but in general the Judiciary meets its needs”².

According to Mr. Haxhiu, several measures were taken in this regard, emphasizing that the Durrës court has been moved to a larger building, while the Lushnja court physical archive problem has been resolved. The space needed for the Court of Appeal of General Jurisdiction in Tirana will be provided through an additional building in Tirana, close to current Court of Appeal.

In regard to the emergency situation with the High Court for office space, from a meeting with the Acting Chancellor of the High Court, the situation is no longer an emergency. The procedure for the final granting of the construction permit for a new complex of building on the New Boulevard of Tirana, Block 4, consisting of two private towers and the new building of the High Court is near completion. The permit was granted by the KKRT of the Republic of Albania and the clearance of the permit by the Municipal Council of the Municipality of Tirana is under way. The private construction company building the complex of two private towers has agreed to build free of charge the new premises of the High Court, composed of five floors on the ground and two floors underground. The public premise will be the first to be built.

According to the KLGJ Annual Report 2024⁵, it remains urgent to improve the construction infrastructure through the construction of new buildings for the Administrative Court of First Instance of Tirana, the Courts of First Instance of General Jurisdiction of Tirana, of Fier, Lezhë and Durrës. The requirements for the implementation of these projects have also been part of the medium-term budget program document 2025-2027.

Meanwhile, KLGJ has carried out studies for all courts in need for new buildings, while there has been a lack of cooperation between local and central governments units in providing the courts, with land and construction permits for their new premises.

- Lack of relevant financial bill for the funds needed to implement the New Judicial Map in 2023. In 2024 and half of 2025, this constraint was partially addressed, with KLGJ now fully informed and aware of the main financial needs to ensure an effective implementation of the New Judicial Map.
- Insufficient knowledge of magistrates about the main indicators of the budget and the investment needs of their unit. Not addressed.
- Lack of investment projects for office space for some courts. Partially addressed.
- The Public Procurement Law No. 162/2020 is insufficient for SPAK sensitive materials procurement. Not addressed.
- Exorbitant fees submitted by the Albanian Post and the State Cadastral Agency to SPAK and some courts. Not addressed.
- Very low fee for State subsidised legal services for people on social assistance. Not addressed.

Analysis of the main budget problem: delayed ICMIS project

The Integrated Case Management Information System (ICMIS) is one of the technological pillars of the justice reform. It aims to unify judicial data and enable electronic tracking of every case, improving the efficiency and transparency of the judiciary.

The main objectives of ICMIS are four:

1. Unification of judicial data: Creation of a unique system for all courts and prosecutors.
2. Transparency and public access: Publication of the progress of court cases and decisions online.
3. Automation of procedures: Reduction of bureaucracy and time for processing files.
4. Inter-institutional interaction: Connection with state registries, bailiffs and lawyers.

History of the ICMIS

The implementation of this project began in 2017 and has been significantly delayed. One of the main factors hindering implementation is the lack of clear appreciation by court and prosecutors' heads of their fundamental importance in the performance of the justice system.

However, although delayed in these seven and a half years, the ICMIS, which has only really started to be implemented in court structures last year, has gradually spread to courts and prosecutors' offices.

According to the KLGJ 2024 annual report, the year 2024 marks the year in which the several-year efforts of the KLGJ to establish and operate a new Integrated Case Management Information System finally come to life. Following the approval of the budget for the judicial system for 2025, funds have been allocated for the new ICMIS project, a project covering five budget years.

In addition, the first installment of the Swedish grant based on the agreement with the Swedish Embassy was disbursed in December 2024, paving the way for the start of work on the construction of the new system.

Data from ICMIS

The system has been installed in 100% of first instance courts and 90% of appeal courts. Its use in the prosecution remains partial, with around 75% of prosecution offices registering cases electronically. The Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court have developed dedicated modules, but not fully connected to the central system. By December 2024, 60-65% of court files are registered and tracked entirely in ICMIS, while the rest use a hybrid method (electronic + physical). The publication of court decisions has improved, with around 76% of 2024 decisions published in real time online. The integration of electronic signature is still limited, as it is used by only around 41% of judges and 38% of prosecutors. The table below provides the level of implementation of ICMIS for the period 2017-2024. This level still leaves much to be desired, for a project that was intended to last only 5 years.

Institution	Institutions covered	Full use (digital only)	Hybrid use (digital + physical)	Remarks
Courts of First Instance	100% (22 courts)	58%	42%	Full use mainly in Tirana, Durrësi, Shkodra
Courts of Appeal	90% (5 out of 6 courts)	50%	50%	Gjirokastra court still in partial transition
High Court	100%	40%	60%	Partial integration with the central system
Constitutional Court	100%	35%	65%	Dedicated modules, not fully integrated
District Prosecutors' Offices	75% (18 out of 24)	45%	55%	Delay in integration with SPAK and Judicial Police

Table 1. Implementation of the ICMIS project 2017-2024

Despite the achieved progress, structural, technological, financial and staff mindset challenges continue to seriously hinder its full implementation.

ICMIS and the Budget: two Siamese brothers

The full implementation of ICMIS would mean asaving of more than 5 - 5.5 million Euro per year of the current expenses of the judicial system (or 8.5% of the total), in the cost of maintaining the physical archive, physical documentation and personnel for the physical documentation of the activity of the New Justice system, for paper and postal services, transport, etc..

How does digitalization reduce the budget costs of the justice system?

The digitalization of the justice system in Albania, through the ICMIS project, aims to replace traditional manual and physical processes with electronic solutions. In addition to improving transparency and efficiency, this reform brings a significant reduction in short-term and long-term budgetary costs.

Areas where digitalization significantly reduces costs:

- Reduction of costs for paper, printing and physical archiving

Currently, each court processes tens of thousands of pages per year for files, notices, decisions and communications. With the transition to an electronic system, documents are stored and distributed digitally.

The estimated annual savings are 800 thousand Euro per year, according to data from the Supreme Court of Justice for 2024.

- Reduction of postal and physical notification costs

Notices to parties, lawyers and institutions will be made online through the ICMIS system or official email. This eliminates the costs of postal services and internal couriers.

The estimated annual savings are 700 thousand Euro at the national level, including prosecutors.

- Optimizing human resources

Rapid digitalization eliminates the need for many manual technical support positions (archivists, protocol keepers, dispatchers). This

allows fewer staff to cover more work volume through automation.

Estimated savings: Around 2 million Euro per year from not replacing retiring positions.

- Reducing costs for physical buildings and archives

Many court and prosecutor's offices buildings face high rental costs for file storage. The transition to an electronic archive avoids the rental, maintenance and cleaning of physical premises.

Estimated savings: Up to 1.7 million Euro in total per year, according to the Ministry of Justice projections.

- Reduction of physical transport costs

Parties no longer need to appear physically to the courts, to withdraw decisions or documents. Courts and prosecutor's offices avoid using means of transport within districts.

Estimated savings: Around 350 thousand Euro per year, due to internal electronic interaction.

- Indirect benefits to the budget

In addition, there are also indirect benefits affecting the budget. Digitalization means huge shortening of the time for legal and judicial processes. Fewer hearings would mean less expenses for free legal aid and increased reliability and efficiency of the budget. It will also mean fewer complaints and unnecessary retrials, as well as better transparency and control. Digitalization means reduced opportunity for corruption and abuse of public funds. Therefore, the full and complete digitalization of the justice system is not only a step towards modernization, but also an effective strategy for cutting public spending.

The initial investment in infrastructure and training translates into sustainable savings and increased quality of judicial service for citizens.

A good part of the financial saving would come from the release of working time for the greater part of the support staff of the courts and prosecutors' offices. This time could be used in other support activities, in increasing communication with the public and in more expanded digital services by the courts and prosecutors' offices.

Budget item	Expenses before digitalization (million Euro)	Expenses after digitalization (million Euro)	Savings (million Euro)
Paper, printing, tonner	1.2	0.4	0.8
Postal services	0.95	0.25	0.7
Payroll of support staff	12.4	10.4	2
Physical building and archives	1.4	10.4	1.7
Transport	0.75	10.4	0.35
Total			5.55

Table 2. Savings in budget costs from accelerated digitalization program 2026-2028

The reasons behind the huge delay of ICMIS implementation

There are a lot of factors/reasons that inhibited the implementation in time of the ICMIS. They can be grouped in the following 8 factors

1. Insufficient technological infrastructure

Many courts and prosecutors still use outdated equipment, with insufficient servers and un-unified case management systems. The lack of powerful central servers causes frequent outages. On the other side, the lack of stable and high-speed internet connection, especially in district courts, hinders the functioning of digital systems in real time.

There is unstable internet in the district courts of Kukës, and before the New Judicial Map even in Pukë, Tropojë, Përmet and Gramsh courts. The existing systems such as “ICMIS” or electronic registries, often experience interruptions due to the lack of regular maintenance and technical support.

2. Lack of interoperability of systems

The systems of different justice institutions (Courts, SPAK, KLGJ, KLP, General Prosecutor’s Office, Prison Directorate, etc.) do not fully communicate with each other. Part of the problem is the standardization of data: each institution has different recording and reporting formats. This lack of interoperability hinders the tracking of files and transparency for the public.

3. Limited human capacities

Often, judicial and administrative staff has limited knowledge on the use of new technological systems. Around 55% of them are not adequately informed and trained. The lack of continuous and specialized training creates resistance to the use of digital platforms.

Due to the heavy workload, staff often chooses traditional procedures instead of electronic ones, slowing down the digitalization process.

4. Cyber security and data protection

Justice systems hold very sensitive information. Cyber attacks on state institutions in recent years, especially in December 2022, have highlighted the weaknesses of protection.

The lack of strong protocols for copying and recovering data (back-up) risks the loss of judicial documents. There are still gaps in the implementation of the law on the protection of personal data⁴, in relation to digital justice systems.

5. Incomplete legal framework for digitalization

Many legal procedures still require physical documents and handwritten signatures, limiting the full use of electronic documents. The use of online trials (e-hearings)⁵ is still experimental and not standardized, although the COVID-19 pandemic showed the need for this practice.

On the other hand, the law on the judicial archive⁶ does not clearly define the standards for the long-term preservation of documents in electronic format. Online trials (e-hearings) do not yet have approved standards.

6. Resistance to change

A part of judges, prosecutors and administrative staff express skepticism about the new systems, seeing them as complicated or as a means of control. Some judicial staff see the ICMIS as a tool for increasing accountability, showing reluctance to fully use it. On the other hand, the institutional culture still linked to traditional procedures hinders the full adoption of digital platforms. The use of physical documents is still seen as “more secure” and more legally acceptable. The traditional approach of physical files still prevails in our courts and prosecutor’s offices.

7. Insufficient funding

Digitalization requires large investments in infrastructure, software, training and cybersecurity. Budgets allocated to the judiciary are often limited and are spent mainly on basic functioning, leaving little room for innovation. In 2023, the Ministry of Finance blocked the funds for digitalization of the Justice System.

8. Lack of monitoring and evaluation

In the justice system, both in the courts and in the prosecution, there are no clear mechanisms to measure the progress of digitalization and its impact on the effectiveness of the system. Existing strategies often remain at a declarative level, without measurable indicators.

The consequences of the combined action of all these factors lead to (i) delays in judicial processes, due to parallel physical and electronic registration, increasing the backlog of pending cases; (ii) lack of full transparency for citizens and lawyers; (iii) difficulties in producing accurate statistics on the performance of the judiciary, as well as (iv) the risk of loss or compromise of sensitive data.

The approval of the New Judicial Map in 2023 was not accompanied by the relevant financial bill, which required an urgent increase in funds for almost all budget implementation units in the judicial system.

With the New Judicial Map, the establishment of an only one Court of Appeal of General Jurisdiction, with headquarters in Tirana and with 78 judges, necessarily requires the construction of such a building, which meets all the requirements and conditions necessary for the accommodation of all judges, judicial civil servants and all other court staff.

In the current conditions, the Court of Appeal of Tirana does not have such capacities, as regards the number of courtrooms, the number of offices for judges, or even the number of service offices. It is almost impossible for the Court to conduct its activity under normal conditions. On the other hand, the construction of a building that will meet all the needs, is not only a long process from the point of view of time, but also quite an expensive one, if the standards needed in the construction of courts are taken into consideration.

As a result, the Ministry of Finance was forced to freeze the funds for office space investments in the Justice system for the fiscal year 2023, without the presence of the financial bill of the New Judicial Map. The frozen fund was at the level of several millions of euros. These funds are effectively lost, as the Law on the State Budget does not allow for the recovery of unused funds in the following financial year

Reasoning: Funds necessary to cover the additional costs of the implementation of the

Good examples from neighboring countries

There are many regional examples of good practices. For example, North Macedonia has implemented the “ACMIS” system with full interoperability with state registers and mandatory electronic signature⁷. Montenegro has completed the transition of judicial archives to electronic format⁸, by eliminating physical documentation in most cases. Meanwhile, Kosovo is implementing the “SMIL” system, which includes modules for communication with lawyers and bailiffs, reducing physical documentation by over 70%⁹.

Case study: Kosovo “SMIL” system

“The Case Information Management System, known as SMIL, is a project prepared by the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) and the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPK).

The new cases are registered in real time in this system and that they are allocated to judges automatically. “During this period, the registration of old cases was also done, both in the courts and in the prosecutor's office, that is, unfinished cases that are inherited. New subjects are also registered in real time as they arrive. For each task performed in the case resolution process by a court employee, the system has the steps to perform that task related to the case, just as the tasks are performed in the system, the system

automatically then generates for the next user with take the case further”, says Fatmir Rexhepi Rexhepi, head of IT Department at the Kosovo Judicial Council, adding that the criteria for distributing cases to judges is equal for everyone, without distinction”. He also remarks that “The official in the court who registers the case, in no way has a chance to decide which judge will be appointed, under no circumstances. The system is developed, designed in such a way that it makes this impossible. Only in the financial aspect it is supported by the donor, while the implementation of the project was done by the two councils”.

Lulzim Matoshi, senior clerk at the Basic Court in Pristina, says that the cases are initially submitted by the parties or institutions to the reception office. After taking the action from the receiving official, he affirms that the matter goes to their office that they take the actions which must first be registered in the physical registers.

“The subject during registration in the SMIL system has several actions: after the screening, the subject is linked, the register number is noted. After passing that step, the scanned document is uploaded, the lawsuit with its submissions continues to the other steps. The connection of the evidence, until the appointment of the judge, even one case is registered as complete. Then we take the actions with the books we have internally, note the number of the case and send that case to the judge that the system has selected automatically”, says Matoshi.

This system, according to Mentor Bajraktar, a judge in the Special Department of the Basic Court in Pristina, increases accountability. He highlights that “I think it increases accountability, because every action of each official and each judge acting on that case is recorded in the SMIL program, even if there is no other record of who acted. So everyone has their own responsibilities and duties¹⁰”.

Recommendations to solve the issues

The adaptation of the new justice system to information technology and digitalization is a necessary process, but one that requires an integrated approach. To overcome the challenges, (i) sustainable investments in infrastructure and cybersecurity, (ii) systematic training for judges, prosecutors and their support staff, (iii) full interoperability of systems and data standardization, and (iv) updating the legal framework to support the use of electronic documents and procedures are needed.

This would enable a more transparent, more efficient and more accessible justice system for citizens.

- **Recommendation 1**

Both the KLGJ and the KLP should work intensively to ensure proper attention to the implementation of projects for the full digitalization of our judicial system and to ensure the necessary funds, by raising

awareness in Parliament and its Laws Committee, as well as by working closely with specialists and leaders of the Ministry of Finance and the Government as a whole.

The IT experts of the KLGJ and the KLP should also work closely with experts of the National Information Society Agency (NAISA), for the proper implementation of information technology protocols in all phases of the full digitalization of the Justice system

- **Recommendation 2.**

Both the KLGJ and the KLP must work hard to ensure sustainable investments in the digital infrastructure of their systems. They must overcome the old mindset that it is enough to buy a new generation of computers for the staff.

The KLGJ and the KLP must pay close attention to the significant increase in the capacity of the central servers of the courts and prosecutors' offices, as well as to the improvement of computer equipment. New servers consume a lot of energy and to compensate for the increase in electricity costs, the heads of the courts and prosecutors' offices should implement projects to install photovoltaic panels on the terraces of their institutions, taking an example from the GJKKO, which estimated that it has reduced the costs of the electricity bill by a third with this investment and expects to fully cover it in the coming years.

The managers of the KLGJ and the KLP have to work together with AKSHI managers and internet providing companies to ensure fast and stable internet connections in all courts.

- Recommendation 3.

The KLGJ and KLP should advocate and meet/dialogues and work together with AKSHI managers to ensure data standardization and exchange of information in real time, by integrating ICMIS with the SPAK, judicial police, civil status and tax registers data.

They should work to create dedicated modules for real-time data exchange.

- Recommendation 4.

The KLGJ and the KLP should work to ensure ongoing training for users of digital systems. They should establish mandatory training for judges, prosecutors and court administration, with periodic retraining.

The High Court and the general jurisdiction courts should ask experts in the field in their institutions to provide practical manuals and online technical assistance for all users of the ICMIS system. The KLGJ and KLP managers should prepare the budget and the plan of activities for the provision of on-the-job training and online technical assistance, as well as plan for additional staff, if needed.

- Recommendation 5.

The managers of the KLGJ, the KLP, the courts and prosecutors' offices should work to improve the cyber security of their institutions, requiring the implementation of advanced encryption certificates and backup copies, as well as the drafting of an emergency plan for data recovery.

The KLGJ and KLP managers have to advocate and meet/dialogue with AKSHI managers. They should prepare the budget and the plan of activities to increase cyber security in their institutions, as well as plan for additional staff, if needed.

- Recommendation 6.

The managers of the KLGJ and the KLP should work together to achieve the adaptation of the legal framework, by requesting the Parliament to amend the Law on Electronic Signature, in order to introduce all justice institutions into mandatory electronic signature and to recognize the full validity of electronic documentation in the judicial system, taking the example of the legislative improvements that have occurred in North Macedonia, Kosovo and Montenegro for this purpose.

The Law on Electronic Signature is an important step towards the digitalization of justice, but the problems in its implementation by judges have shown that the transformation cannot be achieved only with legal changes.

The managers of the KLGJ have to work to ensure a strong combination between the training of judges, the modernization of technological infrastructure, the provision of cyber protection standards and the unification of judicial practice. Only in this way can a full and functional use of electronic signatures be achieved in the Albanian justice system.

The managers of the KLGJ should work for the increase and mass usage of online trials. The Law on Civil and Criminal Procedure currently provides for hearings with the physical presence of the parties, but leaves room for the use of electronic means in special situations (e.g. taking evidence remotely). The COVID-19 pandemic created the first limited experience of online trials in Albania, where some hearings were held via video platforms, showing that such a model is technically feasible.

The KLG, KLP, Ministry of Justice and AKSHI have to work together to reach the standardization and implementation of online trials.

- **Recommendation 7.**

The managers of the KLGJ and the KLP should work to create a permanent monitoring mechanism, with periodic reports on the use of ICMIS and the impact on the performance of the judiciary, providing measurable indicators for transparency and reducing delays in trials. Accelerating the full digitalization of the judicial system will, in the medium term will lead to a reduction of up to 10 percent in the budget expenditures of the Justice system, by saving staff and time, by replacing the operation of physical archives and physical documentation of the courts with digital information.

ICMIS is a crucial investment in the modernization of Albanian justice, but its potential is not yet fully exploited. The implementation of the above recommendations will enable a more integrated, efficient and transparent system, bringing Albania closer to the standards of countries in the region and the EU.

Conclusions

- A sustained increase in budgetary funds for capital expenditures (investments) in the coming years is essential for meeting the objectives for improving the infrastructure of the courts, with a significant impact on the efficient functioning of the judicial system and the faster reduction of the stock.
- As in the project of the new judicial map, in the case of the National Strategy for reducing the stock of backlogged cases in the courts, the project has not been accompanied by a financial package necessary to support the objectives of the strategy. The Supreme Court of Justice should accompany the stock reduction strategy with the concrete financial impact of implementing the action plan.
- The Supreme Court of Justice, but also the courts, should strengthen lobbying instruments and use the legal space to discuss and request in the Parliament the fulfillment of investment needs from the government, while also avoiding administrative decisions that block the fund for investment in the judiciary. While there have been very positive developments in this regard in early 2025, the KLGJ should insist on and advocate for new buildings for the Fier court, the Court of First Instance of General Jurisdiction of Tirana, Lezha but also Kukës as well as a long-term solution for the Court of Appeal of the Republic of Kosovo.
- Frequent changes in the budget increase the interaction with government institutions such as the Ministry of Finance, which can lead to delays in the allocation of funds. Delays can also produce inter-institutional pressure or tension.

[1] Policy Paper 2023, page 8, second paragraph

[2]<https://www.facebook.com/transparenc.al/posts/qendra-per-transparenc%C3%AB-dhe-informim-r%C3%AB-lir%C3%AB-qtil-mbajti-m%C3%AB-10-mars-2025-forumin/973291351604874/>

[3]<https://klgj.al/media/1bhpy5gv/raport-mbi-gjendjen-e-sistemit-gjyqesor-dhe-veprimtarine-e-keshillit-te-larte-gjyqesor.pdf>, page 47, last paragraph-page 48, first paragraph

[4]<https://idp.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Ligj-2008-03-10-9887-perditesuar-nga-QBZ-1.pdf> The Law on Protection of Personal Data.

[5][file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Mapping-the-State-of-Play-of-Digitalisation-of-Justice-in-the-WB-web%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Mapping-the-State-of-Play-of-Digitalisation-of-Justice-in-the-WB-web%20(1).pdf) Study in English “Mapping the State of Play of Digitalisation in the Western Balkans”.

[6]<https://president.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Ligj-per-Arkivat.pdf>. The Law on Judicial Archives

[7]<https://rm.coe.int/en-north-macedonia-2018/16809fe2e7> Report of the CEPEJ, the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice

[8]<https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/Montenegro%20Report%202024.pdf> EC Progress Report of Montenegro 2024, page 14, the LURIS database.

[9]<https://www.koha.net/en/arberi/cka-eshte-sistemi-smil-dhe-si-funksionon-ai-ne-gjykatat-e-kosoves> . What is Kosovo “SMIL” system and how does it function in Kosovo courts

[10]The interviews are taken from the article “What is Kosovo “SMIL” system and how does it function in Kosovo courts, published on 11 March, 2025 in the portal “koha.net” <https://www.koha.net/en/arberi/cka-eshte-sistemi-smil-dhe-si-funksionon-ai-ne-gjykatat-e-kosoves>)