

REPORT ON THE TRANSPARENCY OF
WORK OF THE HIGH JUDICIAL COUNCIL
AND THE HIGH PROSECUTORIAL COUNCIL
JANUARY 2025 – DECEMBER 2025

Sofija Mandić



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1. Context and Goals of the Report

Judicial Research Centre (CEPRIS) publishes the third report on the transparency of the work of judicial councils. The first report was published in 2022¹ and covered the period from April 2021 to February 2022.² After the Act on Amendments to the Constitution was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia on 9th February 2022, the then compositions of the High Judicial Council and the State Prosecutorial Council (SPC) entered a transitional period while awaiting the adoption of new judicial laws necessary for the implementation of the new constitutional competences. In May 2023, new compositions of the High Judicial Council (HJC) and the High Prosecutorial Council (HPC) were constituted, and the second report on the transparency of their work covered the period from their establishment until the end of 2024³.

This report covers the subsequent period, from January to December 2025. This period was marked by numerous public protests, with one central demand - the establishment of the rule of law, to be ensured by the judicial authorities. Precisely because of these social circumstances and events, the work of judicial councils and bodies came under close public scrutiny. The work of the judiciary was a major topic in the news almost every day, which clearly required greater transparency.

In earlier reports, we stated that the public's interest in the affairs of the HJC and HPC, especially by the media, is in significant disproportion to the influence of judicial councils on the work of the judiciary, and that one of the goals of our reports was to raise that interest.

The year 2025 seems to have brought significant news in this regard. The public and the media took a satisfactory interest in the work of those who manage the prosecutor's offices and the courts. The public has become an essential control mechanism in establishing the rule of law. It can be debated whether the public took on this new role because of the executive power's attack on judicial institutions in 2025, or whether the same would have happened under regular circumstances.

As with the first and second report, we wish to contribute, with our observations and suggestions, to the improvement of the work of the HJC and HPC and encourage their transparency of work, which should also contribute to an increased trust in the judiciary.

¹ [Izveštaj o javnosti rada Visokog saveta sudstva i Državnog veća tužilaca 2021-2022.](#)^[oib] [Report on the Transparency of the Work of the HJC and SPC 2021/2022]

² The end of the reporting period coincided with the referendum to change the Constitution in the part related to the judiciary, held on 16th January 2022.

³ [Izveštaj o javnosti rada Visokog saveta sudstva i Visokog saveta tužilaštva 2023-2024.](#) [Report on the Transparency of the Work of the HJC and HPC 2023-2024]

2. Data Collection and Analysis Methodology

CEPRIS has analysed publicly available data on the work of the HJC and HPC for the period from January until December 2025. As in previous reports, we have analysed the information available on the websites of the HJC and HPC, which derive from the legal and by-law obligations of the judicial councils on the transparency of the work. CEPRIS has also analysed data on the transparency, which are not an explicit obligation of these councils, but which make an additional step towards facilitating citizens' understanding and access to the information available to the HJC and HPC.

In this report, in particular, the following has been monitored:

- implementation of previous recommendations;
- fulfilment of obligations regarding the transparency of the work prescribed by laws and by-laws;
- way in which the councils report on the transparency of the work and publish reports;
- manner of holding sessions and their transparency;
- transparency in selecting judges and prosecutors;
- availability and searchability of information on the councils' website;
- other activities that improve the transparency of the councils' work.

3. Previous Recommendations for Improving the Transparency of the Work of the High Judicial Council

In the previous report, CEPRIS emphasised several recommendations related to the transparency of the work of the HJC. We shall assess here if important recommendations from the previous report have been fulfilled and, if so, to what extent.

3.1. Publish data on all HJC members and members of all HJC working bodies. The recommendation not fulfilled.

Biographies of all members of the current composition of the HJC are available on its website. Minor standardisation of the format of members' biographies compared to the previous period is noticeable, which is commendable. However, photographs of some members are still missing, leaving them unrecognisable to the public. Information on some members is presented under the category "Biography", while for others it appears under both "Biography" and "Career". The information about members should be consistent, both in terms of categorisation and in the format of the entries (e.g. some are written in the first person, others in the third person, and the content is uneven)

CEPRIS considers that the biographies of members of the HJC should be presented in a way that demonstrates that their activities, even prior to their election to the HJC, were aligned with the Council's core constitutional competence - safeguarding judicial independence. At present, no information on such activities of Council members is available.

While it is commendable that the HJC has published the composition of the previous three terms in a visible place on its website, we reiterate our recommendation that the biographies of members from previous terms be standardised, in line with the concerns identified regarding current members, including photographs of all former members (not just some).

No consolidated information is available on the current membership of the HJC's working bodies, particularly its permanent working bodies. The "Permanent Working Bodies" section contains decisions on appointments to the Ethics Committee, disciplinary bodies and evaluation commissions, as well as decisions terminating mandates. As a result, the current composition of these bodies remains unclear. This lack of clarity constitutes a serious obstacle to their functioning, as judges, prosecutors and members of the public (where authorised) lack access to basic information on their composition and contact details.

As this recommendation has not been implemented, it is considered not fulfilled.

3.2. Publish materials considered by the Council together with minutes of the sessions. The recommendation not fulfilled.

During 2025, the recommendation that all session-related data be made available via the drop-down menu in the "Council Sessions" section was not fulfilled. In the previous report, it was noted that, apart from agendas, minutes and decisions adopted by the HJC, other documents that were the subject of discussion - i.e. materials considered or forming the basis for decisions at sessions – were not available on the website under the sessions section. This primarily related to competitions, exams, exam results, preliminary lists and interviews with candidates (Image 1). The same recommendations were made in the previous two reports, and we therefore note that they remain unfulfilled.

As previously noted, this concern relates in particular to sessions involving selection from among several candidates. The public has no access to the vacancy announcement based on which the decision was made, the composition of the selection commission responsible for ranking candidates, the proposed ranking list, information on candidates' expertise and qualifications, or data relating to the interviews (recordings, transcripts, etc.). It is essential that all such information be made available within the documentation for the relevant session, as these materials form the basis on which HJC members take decisions that are subsequently presented to the public.

Although some of this information (not all) can be found elsewhere on the website, it is unreasonable to expect citizens to locate it, including candidates who have the right to lodge objections or appeals against individual Council decisions.

Additionally, during 2025, we noticed that even the published materials (agenda, minutes) were missing from some sessions. The last available minutes from a HJC session were from 1st September 2025, although four more sessions were held by the end of that year. Also, agendas from individual sessions, mostly those held online, are missing, and we can only make conclusions about topics of the sessions indirectly, based on some published decisions (decisions on termination of office, adopted strategic documents, etc.).

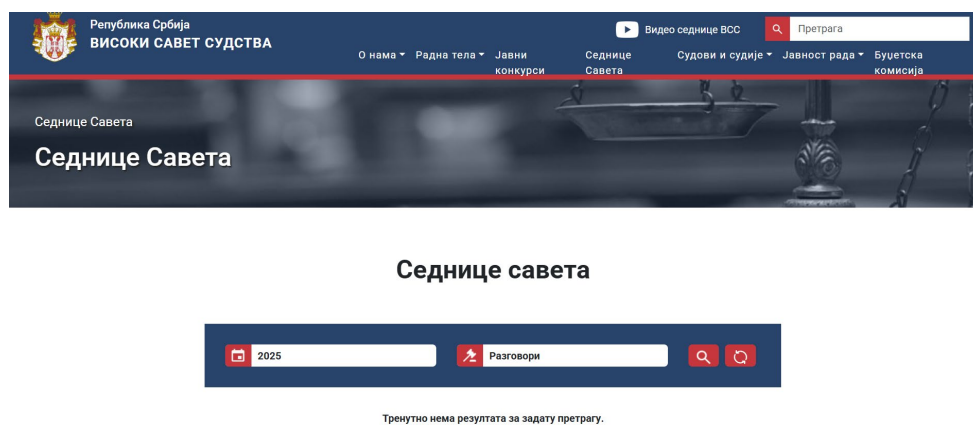


Image 1. Example of missing documentation from HJC sessions: interviews with candidates

3.3. Allow attendance at the HJC sessions, including sessions of its bodies, in accordance with the law. The recommendation partially fulfilled.

All sessions of the HJC, including the sessions of the working bodies, are as a rule public. The sessions of the HJC are announced on the website, which is not the case with sessions of working bodies whose work is equally important for the public, as decisions of interest to the judiciary and the public are made at the sessions. In principle, interested persons can request to attend the session of the HJC, but not the sessions of the working bodies, because those are not announced.

However, as noted in earlier reports, there are still no clear and accessible instructions on how interested persons and media representatives can apply to attend HJC sessions, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. The “Transparency of the Work” section of the website should emphasise that attending sessions is one of the

means of ensuring transparency and should include an email address for submitting applications to the Administrative Office, as well as the deadline for submission (in relation to the start of the session). It would also be useful for the HJC to publish, in addition to this information, a sample application for attending a session.

In the previous report, it was recommended that in the report, in the part related to the transparency of the work, data on requests for attendance at sessions and decisions on those requests should be included, which was not done in the last annual report (for the year 2025)⁴. In the annual report, very little attention is devoted to transparency of the work, limited to a single paragraph that lists the Council's obligations and includes the statement that "in 2025, all activities of the Council were published on the Council's website, in accordance with laws and bylaws".

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the HJC is obliged to ensure the transparency of its sessions, allowing interested persons and representatives of the media to attend, up to the number of available seats in the room where the session is held, in the order of registration with the Administrative Office. We emphasise this in particular because, in the meantime, the HJC has begun publishing audio-visual recordings of its sessions (discussed in more detail later in the report). However, the transparency of its work is not limited to the publication of these recordings, given that the Rules of Procedure recognise both attendance at sessions and the publication of audio-visual recordings as equal mechanisms that operate in parallel, that is, simultaneously.

Although it is, in principle, possible to express interest in attending a scheduled session, in practice this is hindered by a lack of information on the application procedure and by the inability to attend the work of working bodies. In addition, as there is no available data on requests to attend sessions, this recommendation is considered partially fulfilled.

3.4. The Law on the HJC and the Rules of Procedure of the HJC should stipulate the transparency of HJC decisions' data. The recommendation fulfilled.

The Law on the HJC and the Rules of Procedure of the HJC stipulate that sessions are public and that minutes must be kept. The minutes include, *inter alia*, information on the outcome of the vote⁵, and where a decision of the Council is adopted by a majority, the minutes also record the full name of each Council member, indicating whether they voted "in favour", "against", or abstained.⁶ The minutes of the session,

⁴ [Godisnji_izvestaj_o_radu_visokog_saveta_sudstva_za_2025_godinu_27_02_2026_14_28_28.pdf](#) [Annual Report on the Work of the HJC for 2025, 27th February 2026]

⁵ Rules of Procedure of the HJC, Art. 27 para 1

⁶ Rules of Procedure of the HJC, Art. 27 para 2

including these data, are published on the Council's website⁷, except for the minutes of sessions that were partially or fully closed to the public for reasons prescribed by law.

In 2025, the HJC discontinued the previously criticised practice of redacting voting data in the minutes of its sessions, so that the minutes now contain information on which members voted in favour, against, and which abstained. This change represents a positive step and a proper application of the rules governing the work of the HJC, and this recommendation is therefore considered fulfilled

3.5. The Law on the HJC and the Rules of Procedure of the HJC should provide for regular recording of the sessions of the HJC and its bodies, in line with the model used for sessions of parliamentary committees. The recommendation partially fulfilled.

Despite the previously stated recommendation, the regular recording of HJC sessions and those of all its bodies is not guaranteed by law, but rather by a by-law. The HJC's Rules of Procedure provide that the transparency of the Council's work is ensured through public sessions and their audio-visual recording, as well as through the publication of session agendas, minutes, and audio-visual recordings on the Council's website.⁸ It is also stipulated that the audio-visual recording of a Council session shall be published on the Council's website within 24 hours of the session being held.⁹ The transitional provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the HJC provide that the application of the provisions on audio-visual recording shall commence on 1st September 2024.

The first audio-visual recording of an HJC session was published with a delay, in May 2025. Since then, a clearly visible section for these recordings has been made available on the HJC website. The importance of publishing session recordings is reflected in the number of views of the sessions published to date - the average number of views is approximately equal to the total number of serving judges in Serbia (Table 1). Clearly, this number of interested persons could never attend sessions through the regular attendance procedure, as this would not be organisationally feasible. It is precisely the number of views of the published sessions that demonstrates the extent of the public's need and interest in being informed about the work of the HJC.

Date of session	Session number	Number of views
15 th May 2025	Ninth regular session	5,200

⁷ Rules of Procedure of the HJC, Art. 28

⁸ Rules of Procedure of the HJC, Art. 5

⁹ Rules of Procedure of the HJC, Art. 29 para 4

5 th June 2025	Tenth regular session	2,700
3 rd July 2025	Tenth regular session	2,000
18 th September 2025	Tenth regular session	2,500
23 rd October 2025	Eleventh regular session	5,500
13 th November 2025	Twelfth regular session	2,200
9 th December 2025	First extraordinary session	2,100
11 th December 2025	Thirteenth regular session	2,100
Total		24,300 (Average: 3,038 per session)

Table 1. *Number of views of audio-visual recordings per HJC session in 2025*

Given that the recommendation was implemented with a delay, and that the provisions of the Rules of Procedure apply only to HJC sessions rather than to all HJC bodies, the recommendation is considered partially fulfilled.

3.6. HJC to be open for communication with the media and the public. The recommendation not fulfilled.

During the observed period, neither the members nor the President of the HJC addressed the public, either at regular intervals or in specific cases in which the public could have had particular interest. The President of the Council, Zorana Delibašić, addressed the public twice during this period, both times in response to other events. The first occasion was when citizens blocked a court,¹⁰ and the second was a response to an allegation of a conflict of interest in connection with voting within the Council.¹¹ There were no additional public appearances by her, nor by other members of the HJC. As a collective body, the Council issued several statements during the observed period, also in response to specific events or announcements (such as the announcement about the recording of sessions and publishing of the recordings). However, these statements cannot be found via the search function in the drop-down menu (although the menu offers such an option) and can only be reached via manual search.

On the Council's website, it is not clearly indicated with whom the media and the public may communicate if they have questions within the Council's remit, which

¹⁰ [Predsednica Visokog saveta sudstva: Pravosuđe nije i ne sme biti mesto političkih ili uličnih obračuna | Društvo | RTS](#) [President of the High Judicial Council: The judiciary is not, and must not become, a place for political or street-level confrontations | Society | RTS]

¹¹ [Predsednica HJC: Nije bilo sukoba interesa u slučaju sudije Bjelogrić, očekujem da se takvi komentari ne iznose - Vesti iz Srbije, regiona i sveta - N1 info](#) [President of the HJC: There was no conflict of interest in the case of Judge Bjelogrić; I expect such comments not to be made – News from Serbia, the region and the world – N1 Info]

remains unchanged compared to last year's report. In the "Transparency of the Work" section, the Council informed the public that it has a communications strategy in place; however, only expired communications strategies can be found there.¹² The links to the two most recent communications strategies (for the periods 2016–2018 and 2018–2020) are not functional, as they redirect to other information - namely, interviews with candidates.¹³ A similar issue exists with the model of the network of court spokespersons in Serbia, which, when opened, displays a technical error. In the section on the Communications Strategy, the new Communications Strategy adopted at the Council's session of 25th December 2025¹⁴, should also be available. However, at present it can only be found through manual search, i.e. by reviewing the work of each individual session. It is unreasonable to expect the public and the media, for whom the Communications Strategy is of particular importance, to navigate the HJC website in this manner. This, therefore, gives the impression that the Communications Strategy was adopted *pro forma*, rather than with the intention of being genuinely fulfilled, as it cannot be applied without effective access by the public and the media. The new Communications Strategy was adopted at an electronic session with neither the agenda nor the minutes published. Hence, it is impossible to obtain any further information about the decision-making process, including information on the discussion of the draft text.

In the absence of strategic communication with the public, either by Council members or spokespersons, and given that the new Communications Strategy is not easily accessible, this recommendation is considered not fulfilled.

3.7. Other unfulfilled recommendations

The remaining unfulfilled recommendations from the previous report primarily concern the HJC's reporting. The Council's annual reports still do not differ significantly from its information booklets; not all reports have been published, and they are not presented in a clear and accessible manner in a single location on the HJC website.

The recommendation to separate the HJC's current acts from those no longer in force and to archive the latter also remains unfulfilled; its implementation would facilitate easier navigation of the "forest of regulations" for the public.

The name of the judge appointed to act in cases of improper influence, as well as information on the procedure and manner for reporting such influence, are still

¹² [Комуникациона стратегија Високог Савета судства | Високи савет судства](#) [Communications Strategy of the High Judicial Council | High Judicial Council]

¹³ [Комуникациона стратегија Високог Савета судства | Високи савет судства](#) [Communications Strategy of the High Judicial Council | High Judicial Council]

¹⁴ [komunikaciona_strategija_visokog_saveta_sudstva_i_sudova_2026_2030_godine_30_12_-_2025_12_37_30.pdf](#) [Communications Strategy of the HJC and the Courts 2026/2020]

not published in a clearly visible location on the HJC website. This issue should be addressed, particularly in light of the broader social context and data from the NGO sector indicating that improper influence on the judiciary and judges - especially by representatives of the executive branch - is increasing.

4. Previous Recommendations for Improving the Transparency of the Work of the High Prosecutorial Council

4.1. Publish data on all members of the HPC and members of its working bodies. The recommendation not fulfilled.

In the “About the Council” section of the HPC website, under the subheading “Members of the Council”, the names of the members of this body are published, but their biographies are not (except for one member - the Vice-President of the Council), which is why the recommendation is considered not fulfilled.

The HJC has published the biographies of its members, and it would be appropriate for the HPC to do the same. It would also be appropriate for the HPC, same as the HJC, to publish the previous compositions of the SPC, thereby enabling institutional memory on the Council’s new website. This is particularly important for the HPC, given that the name of this judicial body has been changed, while there is constitutional and statutory continuity in the competences and work of the SPC and the HPC.

Similarly to the HJC, information on the current members of the HPC’s working bodies is not available on the website. The “Working Bodies” section contains information on the general acts of these bodies and other similar information, but not on their current composition. This is a serious obstacle not only to the transparency of the working bodies’ activities, but also to their functioning, as it relies, *inter alia*, on complaint submitted by public prosecutors and other authorised persons.

4.2. Minutes of HPC meetings should be published in a searchable format. The recommendation fulfilled.

The minutes of the HPC sessions were published in 2025 in PDF format, i.e. in a searchable format, and the recommendation is therefore considered fulfilled.

4.3. The materials considered by the HPC should be published together with the minutes. The recommendation not fulfilled.

Information on sessions is easy to find and can be searched according to the available categories, and the reader has access to all minutes for the period 2016-2025, which can be searched by each year and type of session (regular, extraordinary). However, as in previous years, the minutes of the sessions are not accompanied by the materials considered during decision-making by the Council members at the session. The HPC publishes the agenda of the session, the decisions, the minutes of the sessions, and the reasons for holding an online or telephone session (if applicable). This recommendation is considered not fulfilled because other materials considered during decision-making are not published together with the session agenda, even though they are required to be submitted to HPC members when a session is scheduled.¹⁵

4.4. Data on the HPC's telephone and online sessions from the observed period, as well as the minutes of those sessions, should be published. The recommendation not fulfilled.

The published data provide insight into the number of telephone and electronic sessions, and even the reasons for holding such sessions. In 2025, the HJC held as many as 13 telephone and six electronic sessions (a total of 19), but minutes were published for only four of these sessions. Given that minutes of telephone and electronic sessions are available for some sessions, but not for the majority, and that this recommendation is repeated year after year, it is considered not fulfilled.

4.5. Interested persons should be allowed to attend the meetings of the HPC and its bodies, in accordance with the Law and the Rules of Procedure. The recommendation partially fulfilled.

The Rules of Procedure of the HJC provide that the Council's work is public. However, interested persons may attend only those HJC sessions that are held in person on the premises of the Council. Under the Rules of Procedure, interested persons and representatives of the media who register with the Administrative Office no later than 24 hours before the start of the session may attend, up to the number of available seats and in the order of registration.¹⁶

It is commendable that the HPC has opted to regulate the procedure for attending sessions in greater detail, and has therefore also established, in its Rules of Procedure, the deadline and manner of registration (which the HJC has not done).

¹⁵ Rules of Procedure of the HPC, Art. 26 para 4

¹⁶ Rules of Procedure of the HPC, Art. 25 para 4

However, as has been repeatedly emphasised, the transparency of the Council's work also covers all bodies of the HPC, not only HPC sessions. Since interested persons do not have access to all HPC bodies whose work is public, the recommendation is considered partially fulfilled.

4.6. The Law and the Rules of Procedure should provide for the regular recording of HPC sessions and all its bodies, following the model used for parliamentary committee sessions. The recommendation partially fulfilled.

The Law on the HPC stipulates that the Council shall regularly inform the public about its work in the manner regulated by the Council's Rules of Procedure. However, the Law does not provide for the recording and publication of HPC sessions and all its bodies, which was the primary recommendation.

The Rules of Procedure of the HPC, which regulate this matter, provide that Council sessions are public. The transparency of sessions is ensured through timely public notification, the possibility for interested persons to attend, and the provision of technical means for their transmission, as well as the recording and publication of audio-visual material. Council sessions may be monitored in real time, as well as after their completion, through audio and video transmission.¹⁷ It is commendable that the HPC has committed to enabling real-time monitoring of sessions, rather than merely publishing recordings after the session, as is provided for in the case of the HJC. Real-time monitoring of sessions is particularly important for public prosecutors, as issues concerning their status are frequently discussed at sessions. Thus, public prosecutors can be informed in a timely manner of decisions that directly affect them. Furthermore, the obligation to provide real-time transmission constitutes a full substitute for physical attendance at sessions for other interested persons, thereby easing the burden on the Administrative Office, which would otherwise be required to receive requests for and approve attendance at sessions. Furthermore, this addresses the issue of limited space for interested attendees, which has frequently arisen, as the HPC's premises cannot accommodate more than a small number of people. Live streaming of sessions also facilitates media coverage, at least in terms of monitoring their content. However, the video quality remains insufficient for media use (as is the case with parliamentary committee sessions). In 2025, the media followed HPC sessions in real time to a much greater extent than before and used extracts from the sessions for news reports. It can be said that the media have already become accustomed to regularly following session recordings, that certain journalists consistently cover this topic, and that they monitor

¹⁷ Rules of Procedure of the HJC, Art. 25.

the work of the Council and its individual members, which undoubtedly contributes to public debate on the Council's work.

The HPC has a "Live" section on the homepage of its website, where all published sessions can be easily accessed. The number of views, as in the case of the HJC, indicates significant public interest in HPC sessions (Table 2). The available data show that HPC sessions have a stable audience, which is on average four times larger than the number of serving prosecutors in Serbia.

Date of session	Session number	Number of views
24 th April 2025	First regular session	2,800
7 th May 2025	Second regular session	3,300
7 th May 2025	Eleventh extraordinary session	2,000
7 th May 2025	Twelfth extraordinary session	852
19 th May 2025	Third regular session	2,300
30 th May 2025	Fourth regular session, Part 1	2,900
26 th June 2025	Fourth regular session, Part 2	5,300
5 th September 2025	Fifth regular session, Part 1	2,400
12 th September 2025	Fifth regular session, Part 2	3,200
29 th September 2025	Sixth regular session	2,100
7 th November 2025	Seventh regular session, Part 1	6,100
17 th November 2025	Seventh regular session, Part 2	6,200
25 th December 2025	Twenty-first extraordinary session	2,200
Total		41,652 (Average: 4,165 per session)

Table 2. *Number of views of audio-visual recordings per HPC session in 2025*

We consider this recommendation to be partially fulfilled, as the obligation to provide audio-visual transmission of sessions is not prescribed by the Law¹⁸ and because only HPC sessions are transmitted, but not those of its working bodies,

¹⁸ The Rules of Procedure of the HPC can be amended much more easily than the Law, and through a procedure that does not involve the public.

whose work is also public¹⁹ and is often of decisive importance for the decisions adopted at HPC sessions.

4.7. Enhancing HPC communication with the media and the public. The recommendation partially fulfilled.

The Rules of Procedure of the HPC stipulate that the Council communicates with the public through a spokesperson or a Council member designated for public relations.²⁰ However, the Information Booklet and the “Transparency of the Work” section of the website do not provide the names or contact details of these persons. Despite the provisions of the Rules of Procedure, representatives of the media are unable to contact one or more HPC members who would respond to inquiries within the Council’s competence.

During the observed period, President Branko Stamenković most frequently appeared in public as a representative of the HPC, primarily in the second half of 2025, when the legislative and executive branches repeatedly criticised the Public Prosecutor’s Office, claiming that it had “broken away from the state”. On that occasion, Stamenković addressed the public, stating that an “incitement campaign”²¹ was being conducted against public prosecutors. His public appearances were more frequent in December 2025 due to the elections for members of the HPC elected from among public prosecutors. These elections became an important issue of public interest.

Given that, during the observed period, there was some communication with the media, but no designated media contact persons, and that such communication remained at the level of individual activity by a limited number of HPC members - primarily its President - rather than a strategic activity of the Council as a whole, the recommendation is considered to be partially fulfilled

¹⁹ Except for the sessions of the Commission which decides on complaints against mandatory instructions for work and proceedings in individual cases, complaints against decisions on substitution, and complaints against decisions on delegation, which were closed to the public. This Commission was abolished by amendments to the Law on Public Prosecutor’s Office adopted in January 2026. Although it has been abolished, it is mentioned here in the context of the rules on the transparency of the work that were in force during 2025.

²⁰ Rules of Procedure of the HJC, Art.7 para 4

²¹ [Branko Stamenković: Pojedini mediji vode huškačku kampanju protiv tužilaca - Društvo - Dnevni list Danas](#) [Branko Stamenković: Certain media are conducting an incitement campaign against prosecutors – Society – Daily newspaper Danas]

5. Transparency of the Work of the High Judicial Council

5.1. Transparency of the work of the HJC in the Law on the HJC and the Rules of Procedure of the HJC

Informing the public about the work of the Council²² is one of its core competences as prescribed by the Law. The legislator has determined that transparency of the Council's work is not a secondary or optional activity, but one of its statutory competences, on a par with the selection, dismissal, or decision-making in disciplinary proceedings.

In addition to informing the public being a competence of the Council, transparency is also expressly prescribed as a *method* of the Council's work. We consider it important to distinguish between these two different aspects of transparency - transparency as a method of work and transparency as an obligatory outcome of the Council's work. Sessions of the Council are public²³, although the Council may decide to hold a session in closed proceedings, in accordance with the Constitution, the Law, and the Council's act. As already noted, the Law provides that the Council adopts decisions by public vote.²⁴

The Law further provides that the Rules of Procedure of the Council, other general acts of the Council, decisions on the election or termination of office of a judge or court president, decisions on the election of the President and Vice-President of the Council, decisions confirming the election of a Council member from among judges, decisions on the termination of a Council member's term of office, as well as other decisions of the Council prescribed by law, shall be published in the *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia* and on the Council's website.²⁵ It is positive that it is prescribed that acts are also published on the Council's website, as we cannot expect that interested parties and the media search legal databases to access the adopted decisions.

Transparency of the Council's work as a guiding principle has been strengthened by the statutory provision that the Council adopts an annual report, which is published on the Council's website, and that it regularly informs the public about its activities.²⁶

²² Law on the HJC, Art. 27 para 1 item 17

²³ Law on the HJC, Art. 18 para 1

²⁴ Law on the HJC, Art. 20 para 3

²⁵ Law on the HJC, Art. 22

²⁶ Law on the HJC, Art. 23

The Rules of Procedure of the HJC provide for the obligation to audio-visually record and publish Council sessions, and more detailed provisions are set out regarding the possibility of attending sessions and the registration of interested parties. In addition, the Rules of Procedure regulate in detail the ways in which the Council objectively and promptly informs the public about its work:

- by holding public sessions and their audio-visual recording;
- by publishing the agenda, minutes, and audio-visual recordings of sessions on the Council's website;
- by publishing Council acts and decisions in the *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia* and on the Council's website, in accordance with the law;
- by publishing other acts of the Council and its working bodies on the Council's website, if this is not contrary to the law;
- by publishing schedules and calendars of activities on the Council's website;
- by publishing the Information Booklet in accordance with the law;
- by regularly updating the Council's website;
- by publishing the three-year programme and annual work plans of the Council on its website;
- by publishing the Council's annual report and the annual reports of its working bodies on the Council's website;
- by issuing press releases;
- by holding press conferences; and
- by publishing other information on the Council's activities and work on its website.

The Rules of Procedure provide that the President of the Council, or another Council member or person designated by the President, may convene press conferences in connection with the Council's annual report and in other cases of public interest.

Although the list of activities is comprehensive, the Council does not implement all of them. In general, activities that would enable closer and more direct contact between the HJC and the public are not carried out - for example, press conferences, which have not been held since the new composition of the HJC was formed. Consequently, for the wider public, which is primarily informed through the media, the Council's work is currently accessible mainly through reporting on its sessions, while recordings of sessions remain the only means for citizens to become acquainted with the members of the HJC.

5.1.1. Three-Year Work Programme and Annual Work Plan

The Rules of Procedure of the HJC provide that the Council adopts a three-year work programme and based on that programme, adopts annual work plans and monitors their implementation. All such programmes and plans are published on the Council's website.²⁷

The Strategic Plan adopted by the previous composition of the HJC for the period 2022–2025²⁸ can be found under “Strategic Documents” in the “Council Acts” section. At the time of publication of this report, the current composition of the HJC has not published annual work plans, which serve as the basis for the Council's annual reports. The Council's website still contains strategic documents dating back to 2013, which should be archived. On the other hand, the HJC's communication plan cannot be found among the strategic documents, as already noted above.

Neither the HJC's annual reports nor its website content reflect the strategic priorities set out in the three-year strategy, including Strategic Objective 4 - *Transparent Judiciary* and the improved visibility and transparency of the Council's work envisaged under Strategic Objective 5 - *Functional High Judicial Council*.

In view of these circumstances, it may be said that the current composition of the Council has failed to report on the existing strategic priorities and to timely adopt and publish new strategic documents.

5.1.2. Annual report and reports of working bodies

The Law on the HJC provides that the Council shall adopt an annual report on its work, which is published on the Council's website, while the Rules of Procedure provide that, alongside this report, the annual (as well as other periodic) reports of its working bodies are also published - whether they are bodies established by law or bodies set up by the Council.²⁹

In addition to its annual report, the Council should also publish reports on the work of its working bodies:

- Judges' and Court Presidents' Performance Evaluation Commission
- Election Commission
- Case Allocation Monitoring Commission
- Budget Commission
- Ethics Committee
- Disciplinary bodies.

²⁷ Rules of Procedure of the HJC, Art. 32.

²⁸ [Стратешки план Високог савета судства за период 2022. до 2025. године.pdf](#) [Strategic Plan of the HJC for 2022-2025]

²⁹ Rules of Procedure of the HJC, Art. 5 para 2 point 9

Under the Rules of Procedure, the Council shall adopt a report on its work for the previous year no later than 1st March of the current year. The report contains information on the Council's work, information on the work of its working bodies, and a conclusion on the fulfilment of the annual work plan and the level of implementation of activities under public policy documents for which the Council is responsible. The report on the previous year's work is submitted to the National Assembly for information no later than 15th March of the current year and is simultaneously published on the Council's website.³⁰

At the time of publication of this report, the HJC's annual reports on its work for the period 2009-2025 have been published, and this practice is in line with the Law. These reports can easily be found on the homepage of the website (in the "Reports" section), as well as under the "Transparency" section, in the subcategory "Reports".

However, from a substantive perspective, the HJC's 2025 Annual Report, as in previous years, is closer in nature to the Information Booklet of the HJC, which is already published on a different legal basis and contains data on the public authority, its competences, organisation, operations and finances. The annual report does not provide any qualitatively new information on the work of the HJC compared to the Information Booklet, and in particular relating to the fulfilment of previously set strategic objectives.

Furthermore, the reports of the HJC's working bodies are not equally well systematised on the website. For example, the report of the Disciplinary Prosecutor and the Disciplinary Commission is available under the "Disciplinary Bodies" section, rather than under "Reports". This report, as well as the reports of other HJC bodies, should be accessible in a single location and easily found. This could be a section on the homepage entitled "Reports" (in plural), as the HJC is obliged, under the Rules of Procedure and the Law, to publish multiple reports.

While the HJC's annual reports are published in accordance with the Law, the most recent reports of the disciplinary bodies (the Disciplinary Prosecutor and the Disciplinary Commission) date from 2022 (the same as in the previous reporting period). At the same time, in order to comply with the Law and the Rules of Procedure, the HJC should publish all reports of its working bodies and designate a clear place for their publication, as is the case with annual HJC reports. This has not yet been done, so it is impossible to monitor the work of the working bodies since their establishment.

Furthermore, the "Working Bodies" section of the website should publish the composition of the working bodies referred to in Article 19 of the Law on the HJC. The current list of working bodies excludes the Case Allocation Monitoring

³⁰ Rules of Procedure of the HJC, Art. 33

Commission, although it falls within the scope of working bodies under the Law. Also, the Complaints Commission is still listed among the permanent working bodies, although it has ceased to exist following the entry into force of the so-called Mrdić's Laws.

In the latest published Annual Report of the HJC for 2025, the section on transparency of the work contains very limited information, as in previous years. We have noticed that information on transparency has further narrowed, as there is no indication of how many press releases, decisions and similar materials were published by the HJC in 2025. The report states that "all activities of the Council are published on the website, in accordance with laws and by-laws", however, as established in this report, this is not accurate.

5.2. Transparency of HJC sessions

The transparency of HJC sessions is here considered primarily in terms of the way sessions are held - in the Council's premises or online, which is exceptionally permitted under the Rules of Procedure when the items on the agenda do not require discussion. In 2025, the HJC held 13 sessions on its premises (eight of which were audio-visually recorded) and 17 electronic sessions (Table 3). Accordingly, more than half of the sessions that year were held online, representing an increase of 24% compared to the previous year.

	In-person sessions at the HJC	Telephone sessions	Electronic sessions	Total	Share of telephone and electronic sessions
2025	13	/	17	30	56 %

Table 3. *Percentage of telephone and electronic sessions of the HJC in 2025*

The trend of increasing use of electronic sessions should be reduced, as it limits the transparency of the Council's work.

With regard to agendas, materials and minutes of sessions, these are not published consistently for all sessions, with certain categories of documents missing in some cases, while there is a noticeable trend towards publishing only the minutes of a session, without any other accompanying materials.

5.3. Public access to data on the selection of judges

Regarding the selection of judges and court presidents, the decisions from HJC sessions and the data contained in the annual report provide sufficient information on the judges selected in the observed period. Information is available on the total

number of judges appointed and the competitions through which they were selected, as well as the decisions on the appointment of each judge.

However, the key issue previously identified has not yet been resolved – the decisions on the selection of judges, if biographical data are excluded, are generic and almost identical for all candidates. The decisions state that the selected candidates are professionally qualified and competent, or that they “meet all the requirements for appointment”. Information on interviews conducted is also identical across decisions, with all candidates being described as “meeting the criteria in terms of communication skills, readiness to perform judicial office, and professional integrity”. Given that the HJC typically selects from among multiple candidates, it is necessary for selection decisions to be properly reasoned, by presenting the selected candidate in relation to others and enabling meaningful differentiation between candidates. Based on the decisions adopted by the HJC during the observed period, it is difficult to determine why a particular candidate was selected and another was not, which is of crucial importance for public confidence in the fairness of the selection process.

In the previous report, we criticised the HJC for failing to provide data in its annual report on the number of proceedings before the Constitutional Court initiated by candidates’ complaints against selection decisions. That practice has since been changed, and in the latest published Annual Report for 2025, information on the number of complaints lodged during that year is available.

5.4. Protection against undue influence

The Law on the HJC provides that, for the purpose of protecting judges from undue influence to their judicial office, the Council shall appoint one of its members from among judges to deal with cases of undue influence on the work of judges and courts.³¹ The establishment of mechanisms to protect holders of judicial office from undue influence, and in particular political influence, was a guiding principle of the constitutional amendments related to the judiciary.

In the HJC’s 2025 Annual Report on its work³², the Council states that it has appointed a member to act in cases of undue influence on judges and courts. However, as in the previous year, the name of the appointed judge is not disclosed.

The annual report also lacks information on the session at which that judge was appointed, meaning that the name of the judge responsible for dealing with cases of undue influence can only be obtained through manual search of the documentation from each individual session.

³¹ Law on the HJC, Art.19 para 2

³² Report on the Work of the HJC, p. 18.

In view of the above, it may be concluded that even judges, who are legally trained and potentially highly motivated to report undue influence, cannot obtain information on which Council member is responsible for dealing with such cases. Considering previous recommendations, it appears that relevant information is being withheld, without any justification.

The HJC's 2025 Annual Report provides limited information on requests for protection against undue influence, particularly given the importance of the issue. In 2025, a total of four such requests were received (compared to ten in the previous year), and none of the requests submitted during 2025 were decided upon. The HJC did find that undue influence had occurred in one case reported in 2024. However, the report does not set out the circumstances of that case. The reduced number of requests for protection, despite an apparent increase in attacks on judges and the judiciary, may be explained by the fact that judges are neither sufficiently informed nor encouraged to seek protection from the HJC. The fact that the HJC did not decide on any of the requests received in 2025 is itself indicative of the effectiveness of this mechanism.

The Council's failure to clearly display on its website the name of the appointed judge and the procedure for reporting undue influence is likely to have a deterrent effect on judges facing undue influence or leave them unaware that a mechanism for reporting such influence exists.

5.5. Accessibility and searchability of information on the website

There are aspects of the website that should be improved to make published information clearer for the public, which is not necessarily legally trained. In the "About Us" section, under the part relating to the Council's acts, both currently valid acts and those no longer in force are published. For example, the Rules of Procedure of the HJC are available in both their current version and several previous versions, which makes it difficult for readers who do not follow the Council's work daily to determine which version is currently in force. CEPRIS believes that the HJC website should clearly distinguish between acts currently in force and those no longer valid.

The Council's acts are also organised by year of adoption, which provides a useful additional search option. However, in their current form, users need to know the year in which a particular act was adopted, or search through the records year by year. Thus, it is recommended that the Council publish a single list of all currently valid acts, with classification by year of adoption provided only as an additional search function. If necessary, the Council may publish earlier acts in a dedicated section or archive.

5.6. Other measures to improve the transparency of the Council's work

With regard to additional activities aimed at enhancing transparency, we have already noted that it is commendable that the HJC publishes a form in the “Transparency of the Work” section, under the subcategory “Requests for Access to Information of Public Importance”, enabling citizens to submit requests to the body and thereby significantly facilitating the exercise of this right. As already noted in Section 3.3 of this report, it would also be desirable for the Council to publish a request form for attending sessions.

It is also commendable that the Council has proactively published, on its homepage (in the “Courts and Judges” section), a graphical overview of the network of courts of general and special jurisdiction, as well as searchable information on sitting judges by name and surname and by the court in which they serve.

6. Transparency of the Work of the High Prosecutorial Council

6.1. Transparency of the work of the HPC in the Law on the HPC and the Rules of Procedure of the HPC

With the adoption of the Law on the HPC and the HPC Rules of Procedure, as in the case of the HJC, the provisions governing transparency have been improved. Informing the public about the work of the Council is among its core competences as prescribed by the Law³³. Transparency has also been established as a fundamental principle of the HPC's functioning.³⁴

The HPC Rules of Procedure stipulate that the work of the Council is public. This is based on the legal presumption of a legitimate public interest and the public's right to be informed, as well as on the principles of equality and the prohibition of discrimination against journalists and media outlets. The Council communicates with the public through its spokesperson or a Council member designated for public relations.³⁵

The transparency of the Council's work is ensured through:

- the timely publication of general acts on the Council's website and in the *Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*;

³³ Law on the HPC, Art. 17

³⁴ Law on the HPC, Art. 18

³⁵ Rules of Procedure of the HPC, Art. 7

- enabling journalists and other interested persons to attend Council sessions, unless they are closed to the public;
- providing information on sessions closed to the public in accordance with the Law;
- issuing official press releases;
- publishing, where appropriate, data from records, reports and decisions in the media; and
- other appropriate means.

The transparency of Council sessions is ensured by timely informing the public of their holding, enabling the attendance of interested persons, and providing technical means for the remote transmission, recording and publication of audio-visual content. Real-time and subsequent access to Council sessions is ensured through such technical means.³⁶

It can be observed that the Rules of Procedure of the two Councils differ only slightly in the manner in which the transparency of their work is ensured. Although the HJC provides for a more extensive list of means of ensuring transparency, the HPC allows for transparency to be achieved by *other means* as well, thereby leaving the list of measures for enhancing transparency open-ended.

6.2. Work plans and reports of the HPC

6.2.1. Five-year work programme and annual work plan

The HPC Rules of Procedure provide that the Council adopts a five-year work programme. Based on this programme, the Council adopts annual work plans and monitors their implementation.³⁷

The annual work plan has a programmatic character and it: defines the current state in the areas covered by the annual report; sets short-term and medium-term objectives in line with established long-term goals; determines deadlines and methods for measuring results; plans short-term and medium-term programme activities in light of the defined objectives, including timelines for their implementation; justifies individual activities undertaken in relation to those objectives; assesses the level of achievement of the objectives; plans further programme activities; and establishes the annual schedule of tasks, including training programmes and the implementation of the communication strategy of the

³⁶ Rules of Procedure of the HPC, Art. 25

³⁷ Rules of Procedure of the HPC, Art. 45

Council and public prosecutor's offices. The Council prepares the annual work plan for the following year no later than 25th December of the current year.³⁸

In the "Documents" section, under the subheading "Strategic Documents"³⁹, the HPC has published newly adopted strategic documents: the HPC Work Programme for the period 2026–2030; the HPC Work Plan for 2026; the Work Plan of the HPC Administrative Office for 2026; the HPC Public Communication Strategy for the period 2026–2030; and the Action Plan for the period 2026–2027 for the implementation of the HPC Public Communication Strategy for the period 2026–2030.

6.2.2. Annual Report and Reports of the Working Bodies

The Rules of Procedure provide that the Council adopts an annual report on its work, which is published on the Council's website.⁴⁰ The Council also considers and decides on the report of the Ethics Committee on compliance with the Code of Ethics.⁴¹

In the "Transparency of the work" section of the website, under the subheading "Reports", annual reports on the work of the HPC (formerly the SPC) appear to be available for the period 2009-2023. However, they are still not adequately systematised. For example, the section for 2016 contains reports for 2015, 2014, 2013 and for the period 2009–2012. This part of the website should be organised so that the search options correspond to the content available under those options. Reports for the period 2016-2024 have been published in such a way that each report appears under an incorrect heading (e.g. the report for 2016 is placed under 2017, and so on).

In the "Transparency of the Work" section, under the subheading "Annual Reports", the most recent annual report of the HPC - for 2024 - is available. The existence of two separate sections on reporting ("Reports" and "Annual Reports") is confusing, particularly as they contain the same content. The "Annual Reports" section should include all annual reports of the HPC and the SPC published to date, while the "Reports" section should contain the reports of the HPC's working bodies, which is currently not the case.

In the most recently published Annual Report for 2024, the HPC does not report separately on the transparency of its work, except in the section on personal data protection, where only the number of requests for access to information of public importance is indicated. This part of the Report should be improved by

³⁸ Rules of Procedure of the HPC, Art. 46

³⁹ [Стратешки документи – Република Србија – ВИСОКИ САВЕТ ТУЖИЛАШТВА](#) [Strategic Documents – Republic of Serbia – High Prosecutorial Council]

⁴⁰ Rules of Procedure of the HPC, Art. 23

⁴¹ Law on the HPC, Art. 17 para 1 point 18

providing more detailed information on the transparency of the work, including data on the attendance of interested persons at sessions, the number of views of session recordings, and similar indicators.

6.3. Transparency of HPC sessions

In the assessment of the recommendation on improving the transparency of sessions, it has already been noted that the HPC has enhanced the transparency of its work both through its normative framework and in practice - by livestreaming its sessions and making them readily accessible on its website.

However, a matter of concern, which should be given greater attention in 2026, is the ratio between in-person sessions held on the premises of the HPC and those conducted electronically, with the latter lacking the presence of the public.

In 2025, the HPC held 12 telephone sessions and six electronic sessions, which, as in the previous year, accounted for more than half of all sessions held (Table 4).

Year	In-person sessions at the HPC	Telephone sessions	Electronic sessions	Total	Share of telephone and electronic sessions
2025.	11	12	6	29	62 %

Table 4. *Percentage of telephone and electronic HPC sessions held in 2025*

The predominant use of telephone and electronic sessions cannot be a sustainable path for the further development of the HPC as a judicial institution of the highest rank. If the practice of “moving” sessions to electronic formats (i.e. decision-making by email) continues, and particularly if decisions continue to be taken by telephone, the principle of transparency in the work of the HPC will be seriously undermined. CEPRIS has already raised concerns in this regard.

Although, in 2025, there were sessions that met the conditions for being held electronically - since the items on the agenda did not require discussion or review of materials (for example, sessions at which it was noted that public prosecutors’ mandates had ended upon reaching retirement age) - there were also electronic sessions that did require discussion and consideration of materials.

For these reasons, and in light of the examples mentioned, care should be taken in the coming period to ensure that the number of electronic sessions does not undermine the progress made in enhancing transparency, both at the normative level and, to some extent, in practice through the broadcasting of HPC sessions.

6.4. Protection against undue influence

The Rules of Procedure provide that, for the purpose of safeguarding the autonomy of the Public Prosecutor's Office and holders of prosecutorial office, and of informing the public about undue influence on their work, the Council appoints one of its members from among public prosecutors to act in cases of undue influence on the work of holders of prosecutorial office and the Public Prosecutor's Office, and regulates the manner of such action by a separate act. The Council informs the public once a year about the existence of undue influence on the work of holders of prosecutorial office or the Public Prosecutor's Office. It may also address the public on an *ad hoc* basis in this regard.⁴²

As in the case of the HJC, although the Commissioner for Autonomy is listed among the working bodies on the HPC website, the identity of the appointed office-holder is not specified, nor is there a clearly defined procedure or visible invitation for reporting undue influence on a public prosecutor. It should be clearly indicated who performs the function of Commissioner for Autonomy.

In the most recently published Report of the Commissioner for Autonomy for 2025, adopted and published by the HPC, the Council member from among public prosecutors appointed as Commissioner - Milan Tkalac - reports that 21 cases were received that year, representing an increase of over 100%, given that 10 cases were received in the previous year. Of the cases received, one third were submitted by chief public prosecutors (including five by the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade, Nenad Stefanović), who generally claimed that publicly expressed criticism directed at them constituted undue external influence. This is a significant finding: chief public prosecutors appear to be appropriating this mechanism, rather than it being used by public prosecutors whose autonomy is under threat. It is also notable that, of the two cases in which the existence of undue influence was established, one (committed by a party to the proceedings) is described in detail, whereas the undue influence attributed to Member of Parliament Vladimir Đukanović is merely noted, without any description of the conduct by which it was exercised.⁴³

Consequently, in 2025 the Commissioner did not regularly report to the public on undue influence on holders of prosecutorial office. Taken together with the limited visibility of both the Commissioner and the procedure for reporting undue influence, this creates the impression that the Prosecutor's Office operates without any external or internal pressure, even though the existence of such influence was the very reason for the constitutional and legislative reforms and for the

⁴² Rules of Procedure of the HPC, Art. 9

⁴³ [Izveštaj Poverenika za samostalnost za 2025. godinu](#), str. 13 [Report of the Commissioner for Autonomy for 2025, p.13]

establishment of the Commissioner as an appointed office-holder within the HPC. Moreover, it is at times *prima facie* evident from media reporting and public statements that the highest state authorities exert undue influence on the Public Prosecutor's Office, yet this is not met with an adequate response from the HPC. Indeed, in two cases in 2025 concerning statements by the President of the Republic that he would file criminal complaints against prosecutors and that certain "prosecutors would be replaced", the Commissioner found no undue influence.⁴⁴

In 2025, the Commissioner did not address the public, showed no visible public engagement, did not encourage public prosecutors to report undue influence, and initiated only one procedure for protection against undue influence on his own initiative.

6.5. Accessibility and searchability of information on the website

Much content is still missing from the website (such as minutes and supporting materials), while some is organised illogically (e.g. duplicate sections on annual reports). In addition, certain pages are empty, displaying the message "no articles were found".

For the sake of clarity, a distinction should be made between press releases addressed to the general public and notices relating to calls for applications or other internal HPC activities. At present, it is not possible to distinguish, through the search function, between communications addressed to the public and notices concerning the Council's activities, which represent general and specific categories, respectively. Accordingly, such content should be searchable on different criteria (press release vs. activity notice).

Therefore, despite improvements in the website's structure and usability, the HPC should pay greater attention to the publication of all relevant content in accordance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework, ensuring that such content is organised so that it can be easily located within the appropriate section.

6.6. Other measures to improve the transparency of the work

As in the case of the HJC, it is positive that the HPC has published a network of public prosecutor's offices. It would be beneficial to follow the HJC's example by also publishing the names of acting prosecutors in each office, as well as standard forms for requests for access to information of public importance and to HPC sessions.

⁴⁴ Izveštaj Poverenika za samostalnost za 2025. godinu [Report of the Commissioner for Autonomy for 2025], pp. 9 and 10

7. Conclusions

Informing the public is a prescribed competence of both Councils, and transparency is explicitly established as a principle governing their overall functioning.

This report shows that most of the previously identified recommendations concerning transparency have not been implemented or have only been partially fulfilled.

Many minutes and all key decision-making materials remain unavailable among the publicly accessible information. Information on persons responsible for public communication and those responsible for protection against undue influence is lacking in both Councils. Their websites do not clearly present procedures for reporting undue influence nor include visible invitations to report such influence on holders of prosecutorial or judicial office.

Reports of working bodies, certain multiannual strategic programmes and annual work plans are also missing from the websites. As a result, annual reporting is largely limited to brief accounts of activities, rather than providing insight into strategic objectives and results. New public communication strategies, although adopted at the end of 2025, are not prominently displayed.

The Councils primarily engage in activities that do not require public participation, while failing to ensure closer and more direct interaction with the public, such as through regular or *ad hoc* press conferences.

In 2025, the HJC made positive progress, including beginning to publish recordings of its sessions. The HJC also put an end to the improper and unlawful practice of concealing voting data from its sessions. It is also commendable that the HPC has adopted and published its strategic documents.

Public interest in recordings of HJC and HPC sessions is also encouraging. Viewership figures are positive, with each session attracting a stable audience averaging more than 3,000 viewers.

8. Recommendations

8.1. Recommendations for enhancing the transparency of the HJC's work

- The HJC should publish relevant and standardised biographies of its members, along with a consolidated overview and biographies of members of all its working bodies.

- Minutes should be published together with the materials considered by Council members.
- Interested persons should be allowed to attend HJC sessions and those of all its bodies, in accordance with the Law. Reports on the transparency of the work should include data on requests to attend sessions and the decisions taken on those requests.
- Interested persons should have access to a standard request form to attend sessions, as well as clear information on the procedure and deadlines, prominently displayed on the HJC website.
- The HJC should strengthen its communication with the media and the public, in particular by holding regular and *ad hoc* press conferences.
- The HJC should publish its three-year work programme and annual work plan, in accordance with the Law and the Rules of Procedure.
- The HJC should prepare its annual reports based on the annual work plan and exclude information that belongs in the Information Booklet.
- All HJC reports should be published and made visible and easily accessible in a single location on the HJC website.
- The name of the appointed judge responsible for dealing with cases of undue influence, as well as information on how to report such influence, should be clearly displayed on the website.
- The Council should publish a list of all currently applicable acts, with earlier acts available in a clearly designated section or archive.

8.2. Recommendations for enhancing the transparency of the HPC's work

- The HPC should publish biographies of all its members.
- The number of electronic sessions should not undermine the transparency gains achieved by broadcasting HPC sessions.
- Minutes should be published together with the materials considered by Council members.
- Minutes of all telephone and electronic sessions from the reporting period should be published.
- Interested persons should be allowed to attend sessions of all HPC bodies whose work is public, in accordance with the Law and the Rules of Procedure.
- The regular recording of HPC sessions and those of all its bodies should be prescribed by law.

- The Council should establish a more strategic approach to media and public communication, in line with the Law and the Rules of Procedure.
- Annual reports should reflect the implementation of activities set out in the annual work plans.
- The annual report should be improved to include more detailed reporting on the transparency of the HPC's work.
- Published annual reports of the HPC (formerly the SPC) should be systematised so that the search function corresponds to the content available on the website.
- Decisions on the selection of candidates should be reasoned in a way that clearly distinguishes the selected candidate from other applicants.
- The name of the appointed prosecutor responsible for dealing with cases of undue influence, as well as information on how to report such influence, should be clearly displayed on the website.

It would also be useful for the HPC to follow the HJC's example by publishing the names of acting prosecutors in each prosecutor's office, as well as standard forms for requests for access to information of public importance and for attendance at HPC sessions.