

THE
JUDICIAL
COUNCIL
ANNUAL
REPORT

2025

TIESLIETU

PADOME

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FOREWORD BY AIGARS STRUPIŠS, CHAIR OF THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL



Once again, the time has come to look back on the previous year in the judicial system through the annual report to look back on the past year in the judicial system. Last year, the bulk of the Judicial Council's work consisted of carrying out the tasks and functions assigned to it by the Law on Judicial Power – primarily decisions on matters relating to judges' careers. It should be noted that its usual functions also include nominating a candidate for the post of Prosecutor-General, a process which attracted particular public attention this year. However, the past year was also marked by several unforeseen challenges for the judiciary, the resolution of which required the Judicial Council to devote significant resources.

The first unforeseen challenge of the year was the increase in judges' caseloads following amendments to the Civil Procedure Law concerning the procedure for enforcement of obligations on court notice (*saistību izpilde brīdinājuma kārtībā*). Having received feedback from the courts that this increase of caseload was jeopardising the proper functioning of the courts, the Judicial Council drafted a proposal and began implementing a solution that would enable a full automation of this process. The solution is expected to be fully functional during the course of this year.

Towards the end of the year, the Judicial Council was animated by the reform of judges' pensions. The Judicial Council identified serious shortcomings that impinged upon the principle of the separation of powers and protection of the independence of judges enshrined in the Constitution, namely, insufficient consultation with the Judicial Council – as the representative of the judiciary – and a lack of due regard for its views when amending the existing judges' pension system. President Edgars Rinkēvičs took these considerations of the Judicial Council into account and also identified risks in the manner in which the legislative process on this matter of constitutional importance had been conducted, and therefore decided to return the draft law to the Saeima for further review. However, the Saeima has failed to respect the views of the judiciary and the President; consequently, the Judicial Council is preparing an application to the Constitutional Court.

The issues surrounding judges' workloads and concerns about pension reform have arisen at a time when a persistent problem has become increasingly acute – the decline in the number of judges and difficulties in filling vacancies. As a result of concerns about the pension reform led several judges to take the opportunity to retire, even though under different circumstances they might have been prepared to continue working. This situation exacerbated long-standing problem of filling vacancies with most qualified lawyers and fuelled debate about a potential departure from the standards of legal excellence in the selection of judges that had been achieved.

The Judicial Council therefore had to be creative and find solutions for urgent improvements to the organisation of work in the courts; following discussions with the presidents of the courts, these solutions are being actively sought and implemented wherever possible.

When considering the future development of the judiciary, I would like to emphasise that work towards the reforms that have been set in motion is continuous, including the most significant of these – the transfer of the courts' administrative functions from the Court Administration and the reform of court support staff. Unfortunately, there have been delays in the process of amending the legislation required for these reforms, and regrettably the Judicial Council's ability to speed up these processes is limited. At the same time, it should be noted that progress has been made, as there are grounds to expect that the necessary legislation will be adopted in 2026, which will mark the first step towards the gradual transfer of court management functions from the executive to the judiciary, whilst also creating the legal basis for increasing the remuneration of court staff.

I would like to highlight a broader consideration relating both to the progress of the reforms and to the aforementioned unforeseen challenges. The reform of judges' pensions has highlighted the shortcomings of the existing mechanism for the separation of powers, which must be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Among other things, the lack of right to legislative initiative allowed the legislature to ignore proposals and views by the Judicial Council without any assessment or vote. Had the Judicial Council's views been taken into account in a timely manner, not only on the issue of judges' pensions but also on other matters where the Judicial Council possesses not only expertise and a more informed professional opinion but also is the voice of the judiciary, a more considered and farsighted outcome could have been produced. Therefore, the juncture is right to open a debate on enshrining the status of the Judicial Council in the Constitution, including by granting it the right to initiate legislation.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of the Judicial Council, all Latvian judges, staff of the judicial system, the Administration of the Supreme Court and the Court Administration, the Ministry of Justice, as well as the Secretariat of the Judicial Council for their hard work. The past year has been one of upheaval across the world. Latvia is not isolated from either world events nor global trends. The Judicial Council's involvement in various processes relating to the judiciary has had a stabilising effect, preventing the principles of the Constitution from being distorted even during these challenging times. Our shared task is to ensure the rule of law, protect fundamental human rights, strengthen judicial independence and ensure a high standard of quality and efficiency in the work of the courts. I am convinced that, by working together, we will continue to develop the judicial system, ensuring that the courts are accessible, effective and understandable to the public.

Aigars Strupišs

*President of the Supreme Court and
Chair of the Judicial Council*

THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL AND ITS PRIORITIES

About the Judicial Council

The Judicial Council is a collegial body which participates in the formulation of policy and strategy for the judicial system, as well as in the improvement of the organisation of the courts' work. Its aim is to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, to promote the self-organisation of the courts' work and to ensure the unified representation of the judiciary in relations with other branches of state power and institutions.

In Latvia, as an independent and democratic state governed by the rule of law, in accordance with the principle of the separation of powers, there are three branches of government – the legislature, the executive

and the judiciary, which is exercised by independent and autonomous institutions. This principle guarantees balance, mutual checks and balances, and diffuses the power of the state. In a democratic state governed by the rule of law, the three branches of government complement one another; none of them is superior to the others or dominates them. However, in order to ensure a fair and impartial trial, the state must take particular care to safeguard the independence of the judiciary. The development of constitutionalism in Europe has highlighted the need for an independent institution representing the judiciary, which can express the collective opinion of the judiciary and strengthen its independence from the executive.



Group photograph of the Judicial Council: Front row, from the left – Līga Ašitoka, President of the Vidzeme District Court; Rudīte Vīduša, Senator of the Administrative Cases Department of the Supreme Court; Inese Lībiņa-Egnere, Minister for Justice; Aigars Strupišs, President of the Supreme Court; Ilze Celmiņa, Judge of the Riga Regional Court; Irēna Kucina, President of the Constitutional Court; Aigars Kaupe, Chair of the Latvian Council of Sworn Notaries; and Inga Kriģena-Jurkāne, Judge of the Riga City Court. Second row, from the left: Juris Siliņš, President of the Zemgale Regional Court; Andrejs Judins, Chair of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Saeima; Armīns Meisters, Prosecutor-General; Guntars Ploriņš, President of the Valmiera Courthouse of the Administrative District Court; Madars Plepis, President of the Kurzeme District Court; Andris Spore, Chair of the Latvian Council of Sworn Bailiffs; and Saulvedis Vārpiņš, Chair of the Latvian Council of Sworn Advocates

Members of the Judicial Council

The Judicial Council comprises fifteen members – eight permanent members and seven elected members. The permanent members represent the highest judicial authorities and the most senior positions within the judicial system: the President of the Supreme Court, the President of the Constitutional Court, the Minister for Justice, the Chair of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Saeima, the Prosecutor-General, the Chair of the Council of Sworn Advocates, the Chair of the Council of Sworn Notaries and the Chair of the Council of Sworn Bailiffs. Elected members, on the other hand, are represented by judges from all three levels of the judiciary: a Senator of the Supreme Court, two judges from regional courts and four judges from district (city) courts, who are elected by the Judges' Conference.

In accordance with the Law on Judicial Power, the President of the Supreme Court is also the Chair of the Judicial Council. The Judicial Council, in turn, elects a Deputy Chair from among the judges represented on it. On 18 October 2024, the members of the Judicial Council elected Ilze Celmiņa, a judge of the Riga Regional Court, as Deputy Chair.

The term of office of an elected member of the Judicial Council is four years. A judge may be re-elected to the Judicial Council, but no more than twice in succession. In order to prevent conflicts of interest and to ensure the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, the status of an elected member of the Judicial Council is incompatible with duties on the Judicial Disciplinary Committee, the Disciplinary Court, the Judicial Qualifications Committee or the Judicial Ethics Commission.

The Ombudsman, the Director of the Court Administration or their authorised representatives, a representative delegated by legal experts approved by the Latvian Academy of Sciences, as well as representatives of judges' associations, may participate in the work of the Judicial Council in an advisory capacity.

15 members of the Judicial Council

The eight permanent members of the Judicial Council (officials) are:

- the President of the Supreme Court;
- the President of the Constitutional Court;
- the Minister for Justice;
- the Chair of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Saeima;
- the Prosecutor-General;
- Chair of the Council of Sworn Advocates;
- Chair of the Council of Sworn Notaries;
- Chair of the Council of Sworn Bailiffs.

The seven elected members of the Judicial Council (judges) are:

- a Senator of the Supreme Court, elected by the Plenary Session of the Supreme Court;
- two regional court judges, elected by the Judges' Conference;
- four district (city) court judges, elected by the Judges' Conference.

Changes to the composition of the Judicial Council in 2025

Changes in the composition of the Judicial Council in 2025:

- On 28 March 2025, Saulvedis Vārpiņš was elected Chair of the Latvian Council of Sworn Advocates, thereby replacing Jānis Rozenbergs as a permanent member of the Judicial Council;

- On 31 March 2025, Andris Spore was elected Chair of the Latvian Council of Sworn Bailiffs, thereby replacing Iveta Kruka as a permanent member of the Judicial Council;
- On 7 October 2025, the Judges' Conference elected Inga Krigena-Jurkāne, a judge at Riga City Court, as a member of the Judicial Council;
- On 7 October 2025, the Judges' Conference re-elected Līga Ašitoka, President of the Vidzeme District Court, as a member of the Judicial Council.

Jānis Rozenbergs
(until 28 March 2025)

Saulvedis Vārpiņš
(from 28 March 2025)

Chair of the Council of Sworn Advocates

Juris Stukāns
(until 11 July 2025)

Armins Meisters
(from 20 November 2025)

Prosecutor-General

Iveta Kruka
(until 31 March 2025)

Andris Spore
(from 31 March 2025)

Chair of the Council of Sworn Bailiffs

Baiba Ozoliņa
(until 1 November 2025)

Inga Krigena-Jurkāne
(from 1 November 2025)

Judges



Aigars Strupiņš

President of the Supreme Court
(from 16 June 2020)



Ilze Celmiņa

Judge at the Riga Regional
Court (elected on 17
September 2024)



Irēna Kucina

President of the Constitutional
Court (from 28 November 2024)



Inese Lībiņa-Egnere

Minister for Justice (from 14
December 2022)



Andrejs Judins

Chair of the Legal Affairs
Committee of the Saeima (from
23 November 2022)



Armins Meisters

Prosecutor-General (from 20
November 2025)



Saulvedis Vārpiņš

Chair of the Council of Sworn
Advocates (from 28 February)



Aigars Kaupe

Chair of the Council of Sworn
Notaries (from 28 November
2023)



Andris Spore

Chair of the Council of Sworn
Bailiffs (from 31 March 2025 31
March 2025)



Rudīte Viduša

Senator of the Department of
Administrative Cases (elected
on 16 September 2024)



Juris Siliņš

President of the Zemgale
Regional Court (elected on 26
September 2024)



Madars Plepis

President of the Kurzeme District
Court (elected on 26 October
2023)



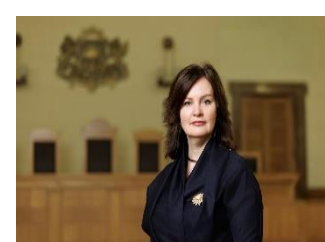
Guntars Ploriņš

President of the Valmiera
Courthouse of the
Administrative District Court
(elected on 15 September 2022)



Līga Ašitoka

President of the Vidzeme
District Court (elected on 10
November 2025)



Inga Krigena-Jurkāne

Judge at Riga City Court
(elected in 1 November 2025)

Secretariat of the Judicial Council

In accordance with Article 8910 of the Law on Judicial Power, the work of the Judicial Council is supported by the Secretariat of the Judicial Council, which is a structural unit of the Supreme Court. In order to strengthen the governance of the Judicial Council and to ensure an organisational and logistical framework commensurate with its objectives, remit and scope of activities, a permanent support structure – the Secretariat – was established in 2017. Since 2021, the Head of the Secretariat of the Judicial Council is Alla Spale.

The functions of the Secretariat are set out in the Law on the Judicial Power in accordance with the powers of the Judicial Council and its Chair, and these include:

- organising the Judicial Council's meetings;
- preparing matters for consideration at meetings of the Judicial Council;
- drafting decisions, opinions, resolutions and other documents;
- managing the Council's administrative affairs;
- organising the Judges' Conference in cooperation with the Court Administration;
- drafting and refining organisational guidelines for the operation of the judicial system, as well as internal and external regulatory acts;
- conducting research on topical issues;
- supporting the work of working groups established by the Judicial Council;
- maintaining the Judicial Council's communication with the public and the media;
- maintaining the Judicial Council's international cooperation, including with the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ) and the European Commission;
- Representing the Judicial Council in its cooperation with state and local government institutions, judicial self-governing bodies, and international organisations.

These functions enable the Judicial Council to be effectively supported in its work and to contribute to the improvement and development of the judicial system.

THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

ACTIVITIES

Meetings, decisions and regulatory acts

The work of the Judicial Council is primarily conducted in the form of meetings, whilst the issues considered at these meetings are reflected in the decisions adopted by the Judicial Council. An overview is therefore provided of the Council's quantitative performance indicators and key decisions for 2025.



40 meetings of the Judicial Council were held, of which:

- 12 in-person meetings;
- 20 written decision-making procedures;
- 8 preparatory meetings.



The Judicial Council adopted 80 decisions, of which:

- 49 decisions on matters relating to judges' careers:
 - on the designation of the place of performance of official duties;
 - on the transfer of judges to a higher court;
 - on dismissal from office on health grounds;
 - on appointments to the posts of president of the court, vice-president of the court and president of the courthouse;
- 19 decisions on matters relating to the organisation of court work:
 - on the appointment to the posts of acting president of the court, acting vice-president of the court and acting president of a courthouse;
 - on the transfer of a judge's post within the court's jurisdiction;
 - on determining the number of judges in courts;
 - on the establishment of courts, their jurisdictions and locations;
 - on standards for the duration of proceedings in courts;
 - on the announcement of vacancies for judicial posts;
 - on the temporary exclusion of a court from the allocation of cases;
 - on amendments to the procedures for the selection of judges, the selection of court administrators, the selection of the Prosecutor-General, and changes to the composition of the Judicial Selection Committee.

12 decisions on the implementation of other tasks assigned to the Judicial Council by law:

- on the priority areas of the Judicial Council's activities;
- on the preparation of the Judges' Conference;
- on the priority measures proposed by the courts and the courts' budget;
- on the approval of training plans and programmes;
- on ensuring the operation of the Academy of Justice;
- on candidates for the post of Prosecutor-General and the appointment of an acting Prosecutor-General;
- on candidates for the post of President of the Supreme Court.

Rules approved and amended by the Judicial Council on matters relating to the organisation of the judiciary:

- the standard time limit for the examination of cases in 2025 (Decision No. 16 of the Judicial Council of 10 March 2025);
- amendments to the regulations on the competition, evaluation criteria and procedure for candidates for the post of Prosecutor-General (Decision No. 44 of the Judicial Council of 27 June 2025);
- amendments to the procedure for the selection of candidates for the office of judge of a district (city) court and a regional court (Decision No. 52 of the Judicial Council of 15 August 2025);
- amendments to the procedure for the nomination and appointment of the president, vice-president of a courthouse, president of a district courts and regional courts (Decision No. 60 of the Judicial Council of 23 September 2025).



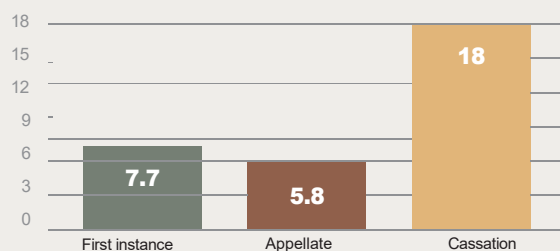
Time-to-decision standards for 2025

Taking into account the need to ensure a person's right to have their case heard within a reasonable time, and in accordance with the fundamental principles governing the conduct of proceedings in administrative, civil and criminal cases, a standard time-to-decision is set by the courts for each calendar year in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Judicial Council by Decision No. 39 of 1 July 2022 'Guidelines for the Management of Case Processing Times' and in accordance with data available in the Court Information System (TIS) and the *MicroStrategy* business intelligence tool.

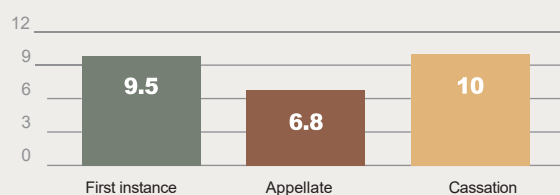
The presidents of the courts submit to the Judicial Council, by 1 February of each year, the time-to-decision proposals whilst the Judicial Council approves the standard average time-to-decision, considering court resources and the need to ensure an individual's right to have their case heard within a reasonable time, as well as observing other fundamental principles of case processing.

In 2024, the courts examined cases within longer timeframes than those set out in the standard time-for-decision for 2024. The Judicial Council, having analysed the previous year's performance indicators and court resources, approved the following time-to-decision for 2025.

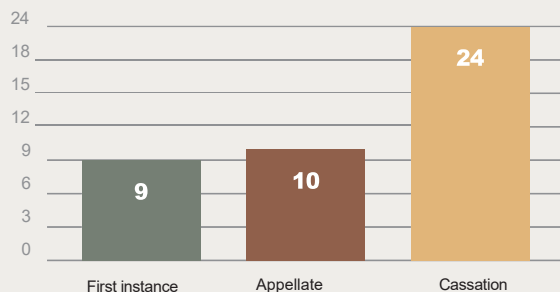
Average time-to-decision in civil cases (months)



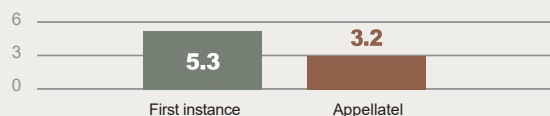
Average time-to-decision in criminal cases (months)



Average time-to-decision in administrative cases (months)



Average time-to-decision for administrative offence cases (months)



Regarding vacancies for the position of the judge in 2025

Based on the discussion held on 28 February 2025 between the presidents of the courts and the Judicial Council, and having heard the views and proposals of the Court Administration regarding the optimal number of judges, the Judicial Council, by its decision of 14 March 2025:

- transferred one judicial post from the Department of Civil Cases of the Supreme Court to the Department of Criminal Cases; transferred two judicial posts from Riga City Court to the Economic Court;
- set the optimal number of judges in the courts, proposing that 30 of the existing judicial vacancies should not be filled in 2025, with the funds allocated to these posts being redirected towards the development of the court support staff system.

Decision No. 20 of the Judicial Council of 14 March 2025, available here: '[On the number of judges in Latvian courts](#)'

In view of the long-standing vacancies for judges, particularly in criminal matters:

- a separate selection path was introduced for candidates specialising in civil law, criminal law and administrative law; this both restructured and streamlined the work of the selection committee and increased the number of candidates for judicial posts.
- Decision No. 21 of the Judicial Council of 14 March 2025, available here: '[On the announcement of a competition for the posts of judges at district \(city\) courts and regional courts](#)'
- In view of the fact that, as of 1 March, a unified allocation system for administrative offence cases was introduced in the courts to strengthen the capacity of the Criminal Division of the Riga Regional Court, a new approach to case allocation has been implemented for the first time – a temporary restructuring of the caseload in the relevant category, supporting the exclusion of the Riga Regional Court from the allocation of administrative offence cases for one year.

Decision No. 22 of the Judicial Council of 14 March 2025, available here: '[On the exclusion of the Riga Regional Court from the allocation of administrative offence cases](#)'

Decision No. 58 of the Judicial Council of 18 September 2025, available here: '[On the exclusion of the Riga Regional Court from the allocation of administrative offence cases](#)'

As various interim measures were implemented to strengthen the capacity of the Criminal Division of the Riga Regional Court to hear cases within the projected timeframes for case hearings.

In addition to the existing practice of the Riga Regional Court of initiating the transfer of criminal cases received at the appeals stage to other regional courts, a measure was also implemented based on the use of tools for organising the work of the court system, namely the introduction of a unified case allocation system for regional courts in cases of administrative offences where decisions made by the court of first instance have been appealed. The unified case allocation system for administrative offence cases was introduced on 1 March 2025, excluding the Riga Regional Court from the unified case allocation system.

Consequently, the temporary change to the case flow is one of the measures whose implementation strengthened the capacity of the Criminal Division of the Riga Regional Court in 2025.

(Documents of the Judicial Council are available on the website <https://www.tieslietupadome.lv>)

Vacancy for the post of President of the Supreme Court

In accordance with the fourth paragraph of Article 89¹¹ of the Law on Judicial Power, one of the functions of the Judicial Council is to interview candidates for the post of President of the Supreme Court and to provide the Plenary Session of the Supreme Court with an opinion on them.

Given that, in accordance with Article 89⁷ of the Law on Judicial Power, the President of the Supreme Court is the Chair of the Judicial Council, the Judicial Council submits its opinion having assessed the candidates' motivation to hold the posts of President of the Supreme Court and Chair of the Judicial Council, their reputation, communication and cooperation skills, as well as their vision regarding current issues and the development strategy of the Supreme Court and the Judicial Council. In 2025, the Judicial Council heard and gave its opinion on three candidates for the post of President of the Supreme Court – Aldis Laviņš, Aigars Strupišs and Rudīte Vīduša.

In its Decision No. 29 of 7 April 2025 'On the candidates for the post of President of the Supreme Court', the Council expressed its opinion on the compliance of all candidates with the specified requirements and their suitability for the post of President of the Supreme Court, whilst ranking the candidates in the following order: A. Strupišs, A. Laviņš and R. Vīduša. The Judicial Council emphasised the importance and responsibilities of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, as Chair of the Judicial Council, in determining the development and strategic objectives of the Latvian court system; called for a choice to be made regarding the candidate based on their solid institutional experience, their ability to steer the work of the Judicial Council with a clear vision, a long-term outlook and a sense of responsibility towards society and the Latvian state.

On 14 April 2025, the Plenary Session of the Supreme Court decided to re-nominate A. Strupišs for the post of President of the Supreme Court; on 15 May 2025, the Saeima confirmed his appointment for a second full five-year term of office as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. A. Strupišs has held the office of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and Chair of the Judicial Council since 16 June 2020. The same person may hold this office for no more than two consecutive terms.

Vacancy for the post of Prosecutor-General

In accordance with Article 38 of the Prosecutors Office Law and Article 89¹¹ of the Law on the Judicial Power, the Judicial Council is competent to announce an open competition for the post of Prosecutor-General, to assess the candidates and to select one – the most suitable – from among them for nomination to the Saeima for appointment to the post of Prosecutor-General. The assessment of candidates for the post of Prosecutor-General is carried out in accordance with the Regulations on the Competition, Assessment Criteria and Procedure for Candidates for the Post of Prosecutor-General.

Three candidates applied for the post of Prosecutor-General in the competition announced on 9 January 2025: Uvis Kozlovskis, a prosecutor in the Coordination of Prosecutorial Functions Division of the Department of Operational Control and International Cooperation at the Office of the Prosecutor-General; Aivars Ostapko, Senior Prosecutor in the Department of Operational Control and International Cooperation at the Office of the Prosecutor-General; and Juris Stukāns, the incumbent Prosecutor-General.

On 11 June 2025, following the Judicial Council's hearing of all three candidates for the post of Prosecutor-General, none of the candidates – U. Kozlovskis, A. Ostapko and J. Stukāns – received the number of votes required to be nominated for the post of Prosecutor-General. Consequently, the competition ended without a result.

In accordance with the fourth subparagraph of Article 41² of the Prosecutor's Office Law, by Decision No. 45 of the Judicial Council dated 27 June 2025, upon the expiry of J. Stukāns, the Judicial Council, by its Decision No. 45 of 27 June 2025, appointed Arvīds Kalniņš, Senior Prosecutor of the Criminal Law Department of the Office of the Prosecutor-General, to act as *ad interim* Prosecutor-General from 12 July 2025.

On 14 July 2025, the Judicial Council announced an open competition for the post of Prosecutor-General. At the same time, to ensure the widest possible pool of candidates the Judicial Council, the Judicial Council amended the Regulations on the Competition for the Post of Prosecutor-General, the Assessment Criteria and the Procedure, setting a longer application deadline.

Four candidates applied for the post of Prosecutor-General : Armīns Meisters, Senior Prosecutor at the Riga Judicial District Prosecutor's Office; Jānis Ilsteris, Senior Legal Adviser at the Legal Department of the Competition Council and former prosecutor at the Specialised Prosecutor's Office for Organised Crime and Other Sectors; Juris Juriss, a judge at the Constitutional Court and former Senior Prosecutor at the Coordination Division for Combating Money Laundering within the Criminal Law Department of the Office of the Prosecutor-General; and the incumbent Prosecutor-General, J. Stukāns.

On 7 November 2025, the Judicial Council, having heard the candidates' presentations and assessed all candidates' work experience and education, organisational and managerial skills, views on the future operation and development of the Public Prosecutor's Office, strategic objectives, the international integration and cooperation of the Prosecutor's Office, its reputation, activities in the scientific or academic field, as well as efforts to enhance professional qualifications, deemed A. Meisters to be the most suitable candidate and decided to nominate him for appointment to the post of Prosecutor-General.

On 20 November 2025, the Saeima appointed A. Meisters, the former Senior Public Prosecutor of the Riga Judicial District Public Prosecutor's Office, to the post of Prosecutor-General.

The judicial budget request for 2025

At its meeting on 11 June 2025, the Judicial Council reviewed and endorsed the priority measures proposed in the courts' budget for 2026–2030.

Priority measures supported by the Supreme Court and the additional state funding required for them:

- maintaining a competitive staff remuneration system, 314 860 *euros* in 2026 and annually thereafter;
- funding for a state expert at the Court of Justice of the European Union, 55 130 *euros* for 2026;
- vehicle hire, 15 000 *euros* in 2026 and annually thereafter;
- upgrading of the security system for classified premises, 25 000 *euros* in 2026 and 2027;
- Enhancing the security of data infrastructure: 200 000

euros in 2026 and annually thereafter.

Priority measures proposed and supported by regional and district (municipal) courts, and the additional state funding required for these:

- ensuring competitive staff remuneration, 2 001 698 *euros* in 2026 and annually thereafter;
- provision of specialised premises, amounting to 468 438 *euros* in 2026 and 2027;
- migrating the central videoconferencing infrastructure to a cloud-based service and replacing obsolete videoconferencing equipment, amounting to 494 090 *euros* in 2026 and 121 410 *euros* in 2027, and annually thereafter;
- renewal of Trados translation tool licences and the central server: 91 000 *euros* in 2026 and annually thereafter;
- functional support for the core operations of the courts (rent, postal costs, etc.), 1 143 514 *euros* in 2026 and annually thereafter.

In accordance with the fourth subparagraph of Article 502 and the first subparagraph of Article 89¹¹ of the Law on the Judicial Power, the Judicial Council, at its meeting on 17 October 2025, having examined the budget requests for 2026 from the district (city) courts, the regional courts and the Supreme Court, decided to support the budget requests for 2026 from the district (city) courts and the regional courts, whilst: 1) maintaining the requirement that the Supreme Court's 2026 budget include priority measures relating to security and protection: 200 000 *euros* – to enhance the security of the Supreme Court's data infrastructure; 25 000 *euros* – to upgrade the security systems in the workspaces of the Confidentiality Division; and 2) expressing objections that, during the drafting of the 2026 state budget, there was no full and lawful consultation with the judiciary, nor was there an assessment of priority measures, nor has the Cabinet of Ministers provided the grounds for its decision in accordance with the third paragraph of Article 161 and the fifth paragraph of Article 19 of the Law on Budget and Financial Management.

The judiciary also takes into account the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers at its to reduce expenditure on judicial staff remuneration for 2027 and subsequent years, specifically the portion relating to performance-related bonuses for staff.

The Chair of the Judicial Council emphasised that significant problems had been identified during the budget-drafting process, including an inconsistent approach to

determining base expenditure and the exclusion of priority measures from the draft budget without justification.

Although the Supreme Court had submitted its priority measures in good time – measures which had previously been agreed and supported by the Judicial Council – the Ministry of Finance failed to include them within the overall framework of the state budget, thereby preventing them from being technically submitted to the Saeima for consideration. Two of the Supreme Court's priorities, which are directly linked to national security and the enforcement of legislation, have not been supported: the adaptation of premises to ensure confidentiality in accordance with the security requirements set out in the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations security requirements set out in the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations, and ensuring the availability of the Supreme Court's information systems and data in the event of a threat by using an off-site backup solution (cloud service). The Chair of the Judicial Council drew attention to contemporary threats to the functioning of the judiciary, including the risk of cyber-attacks, citing as an example the experience of Ukrainian courts during wartime, where court data in certain courts was destroyed as a result of cyber-attacks, which could only be restored thanks to external backup solutions. This experience confirms the validity of the Supreme Court's priorities.

The Chair of the Judicial Council pointed to the inadequate and perfunctory dialogue between the executive and the judiciary during the budget-setting process. The Supreme Court has not been involved in a timely and meaningful manner in discussions on priorities, has not received a reasoned response regarding the rejection of its proposals, and has not been invited to the Cabinet of Ministers' meeting to approve the final draft budget. As a constitutional body, the judiciary is subject to the same rules as executive authorities in the budgetary process, even though it requires a special status in line with the principle of the separation of powers. Unlike the budget requests of the Saeima and the Cabinet of Ministers, the judiciary's budget request may be amended by both the executive and the legislature, effectively denying the judiciary direct dialogue with the Saeima regarding the necessary funding. By amending the Supreme Court's budget request without the court's consent, the requirements of Article 19(5) of the Law on the Budget and

Financial Management are not met, nor is the obligation established in the case law of the Constitutional Court to provide justification as to how a reduction in funding will affect the court's ability to perform the functions set out in legislation.

Consequently, the judiciary's proposals are formally accepted but effectively ignored, with no substantive dialogue taking place. This practice does not comply with European standards on judicial independence and has also been criticised at the level of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (*ENCJ*).

The Chair of the Judicial Council has written to the Prime Minister, pointing out that the budget process does not comply with the requirements of the law, and has emphasised that the judiciary will use all the options provided for by law to defend its independence, including appealing to the Saeima.

On the reform of the judges' pension system

On 6 February 2025, the State Chancellery presented its vision and draft proposals for changes to the service pension system for judges and prosecutors.

On 20 February 2025, the Chair of the Judicial Council stated in a letter to the State Chancellery that, whilst not questioning its right to initiate changes to the regulatory framework, emphasised that it has a duty to consult the judiciary – represented by the Judicial Council – in a timely and constructive manner. In order to ensure that changes to the regulatory framework are consistent with the principle of judicial independence – which guarantees every person's right to a fair trial as set out in Article 92 of the Constitution – the reform proposal lacks relevant statistical data, impact assessments and constitutionality analyses. The Chair of the Judicial Council pointed out that changes to the judges' pension system must be made: 1) taking into account the principle of the separation of powers; 2) respecting the principle of judicial independence; 3) respecting the guarantees of financial security for judges; 4) on the basis of objective data regarding fiscal benefits. Failure to observe these principles may lead to violations of the Constitution and, consequently, to proceedings before the Constitutional Court.

The table below provides an overview of the changes introduced by the Special Pensions for Judges and Prosecutors Law:

	Current regulations	New regulations for a judge with length of service exceeding under the Judges' Service Pension Law 15 years	New regulations for a judge with service of 10 to 15 years	New regulations for judges with up to 10 years' service	New regulations for judges appointed after 1 January 2027
Time of application		Will apply to judges appointed before 21 December 2011	Will apply to judges appointed from 1 January 2012 up to 31 December 2016.	Will apply to judges appointed after 1 January 2017.	
Number of judges affected		A total of 326 district and regional court judges	A total of 64 district and regional court judges	A total of 75 district and regional court judges	
1. Length of service entitling the holder to a special pension	20 years	20 years	20 years, increasing by 6 months each year until reaching the 25-year threshold	25 years	25 years
2. Minimum special pension (% of average labour costs)	65%	65%	65%	60%	60%
3. Minimum special pension amount in the event of retirement on health grounds or established incapacity for work	40%	40%	40%	35%	35%
4. Maximum special pension amount (the amount increases by 2% for each year of service in excess of 20 or 25 years)	80%	80%	80%	75%	75%
5. Basis for calculating special pensions	The last 5 years prior to removal from office as a judge	The last 5 years prior to leaving judicial office, excluding the last two months prior to leaving	The last 5 years prior to leaving judicial office, excluding the last two months prior to leaving	The period of the last 10 years, excluding the last two months prior to removal	The period of the last 10 years, calculated excluding the last two months prior to leaving office
6. Special pension entitlements granting entitlement to a service pension: the proportion of time served in the post of a lawyer or academic staff member specialising in law at an accredited higher education institution (% of time served)	100%	100%	100%	100% - A judge of the Constitutional Court, a judge of the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor-General 50% - district (city) and regional courts judge	100% – for a judge of the Constitutional Court, a judge of the Supreme Court, and the Prosecutor-General 50% – for a district (city) and regional court judges
Conclusion on the fiscal impact	Present situation	The substantively the present situation	The current situation, with a negligible impact resulting from an increase in the length-of-service requirement by 6 months	The special pension is projected to be lower than the current service pension	The special pension is expected to be lower than the current length-of-service pension

The Judicial Council drew the Saeima's attention to the fact that the draft law affects the guarantees of the independence of the judiciary and of individual judges as enshrined in the Constitution; the draft law has not been drawn up in accordance with sound legislative principles:

- neither in the concept behind the proposed reform of service pensions nor during its consideration were any calculations available to objectively assess the impact of the changes on the actual amounts of judges' pensions;
- the new regulations are intended to apply to judges with less than 15 years' service. The regulations are particularly unfavourable for judges with up to 10 years' service, as they are fully subject to the new conditions, which provide for a significant reduction in the amount of their pensions;
- the minimum pension rate of 60 per cent for judges and 35 per cent for judges who have been relieved of their duties on health grounds is so low that in many cases it will be lower than the general old-age pension, which is calculated in accordance with the general regulations. In this way, the special pension loses its function as a guarantee of judges' financial independence;
- the calculation of the special pension will henceforth be based on the average salary over a 10-year (120-month) period, rather than the last 5 years (60 months), as is currently the case. This change, combined with the inflation rate of recent years, reduces the calculated pension amount and is inconsistent with the principle that judges' pensions should be as close as possible to their final salary level;
- the opportunities for judges of the Constitutional Court to receive a special pension are restricted, as some judges of the Constitutional Court have no prior work experience in judicial or prosecutorial institutions, and are therefore unable to accumulate the minimum length of service required to qualify for a pension.

The purpose of a judge's pension is not to compensate for the loss of earning capacity in a specific occupation, but rather to provide the necessary social security following retirement from the office of judge. Judges who have served the required period in office are paid a judicial pension to ensure full social security upon reaching the maximum age for holding judicial office as set out in the Law on the Judicial Power. In accordance with the principle of judicial independence, the amount of the pension should, as far as possible, be as close as possible to the salary level received by the judge before ceasing to

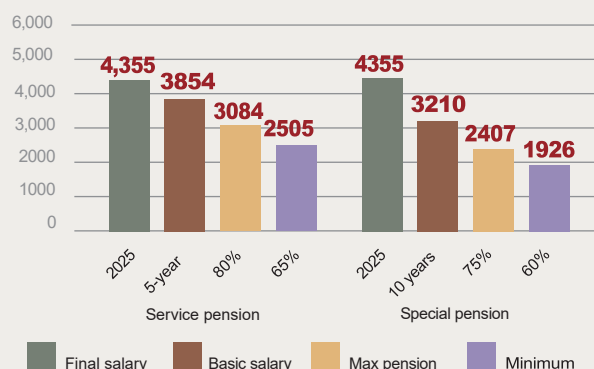
perform their judicial duties – Explanatory Memorandum to the draft Judges' Service Pensions Act. Such a requirement also stems from several international documents that safeguard the principle of judicial independence, including financial security. According to paragraph 5 of standard 10 of the European Standards on the Independence of Judges, 'adequate and secure remuneration', judges' remuneration, which also includes their pension, may not be reduced during a judge's term of office or thereafter, except in cases where the state is experiencing a serious economic crisis, and even then only as a temporary measure (see European Law Institute Mount Scopus European Standards of Judicial Independence 2024).

Given the rushed process of drafting the bill, in which the objections and proposals put forward by the judiciary have not been taken into account or have not been adequately addressed, in order to ensure the high-quality drafting of the bill, as well as a meaningful and respectful dialogue between the branches of government, as provided for by the principle of the separation of powers enshrined in Article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia, the Judicial Council objected to the possible consideration of the bill under the urgent procedure or its inclusion in the package of accompanying draft legislation to the draft law 'On the State Budget for 2026 and the Budget Framework for 2026, 2027 and 2028'; and expressed the view that the draft law should be considered by the Saeima's Legal Affairs Committee. The Judicial Council drew the Saeima's attention to the fact that the draft law affects the guarantees of the independence of the judiciary and of individual judges enshrined in the Constitution; therefore, hearing the Judicial Council's opinion is an integral part of implementing the principle of good legislation. However, no dialogue took place in the Saeima thereafter either. Consequently, on 13 February 2026, the Judicial Council approached the President of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs. The President of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs, also recognised these risks and therefore decided on 20 February 2026 to return the draft law to the Saeima for further consideration.

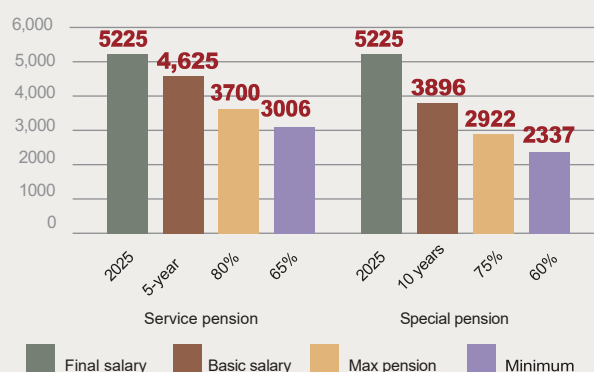
(Documents of the Judicial Council are available on the website <https://www.tieslietupadome.lv>)

Estimates of the draft law's impact on the amount of judges' pensions

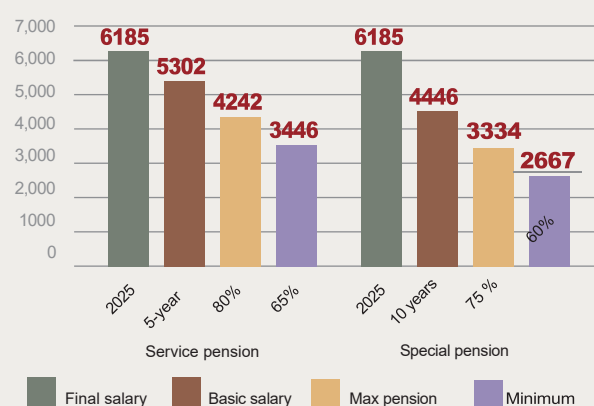
District court judges' salaries and pensions (euros, gross)



Salaries and pensions of regional court judges (euros, gross)



Salaries and pensions of Supreme Court judges (euros, gross)



Cooperation between the Judicial Council with the High Council of Justice of Ukraine

Cooperation between the Judicial Council and the High Council of Justice of Ukraine (*Вища рада правосуддя, VRP*) began in the autumn of 2022, when its then-chair, Vitaly Salihov, sent a letter to the Chair of the Judicial Council, A. Strupišs, describing the situation in the Ukrainian judicial system during the war and requesting support to ensure the Council's operations.

Although the Judicial Council was unable to provide its Ukrainian colleagues with the technical assistance they required at that time, contacts between the two institutions continued, with Latvia in particular supporting Ukraine's accession to the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (*ENCJ*). This objective was achieved in June 2023, during the *ENCJ* General Assembly in Ljubljana, Slovenia, when the organisation decided to admit Ukraine as an observer member.

Full membership of the *ENCJ* for Ukraine will only be possible upon the country's accession to the EU, but observer status also allows *the VRP* to participate in the *ENCJ*'s working groups, seminars and the annual General Assembly, familiarise the judicial councils of other EU Member States and candidate countries with its judicial system, and gain valuable information and ideas for its further development.

Building mutual trust between the judicial systems of EU Member States and candidate countries is a key element of EU enlargement, and the *ENCJ*'s role as a platform for dialogue and the identification of best practice is of great importance. Ukraine has been actively involved in the work of the working groups of particular interest to it. First and foremost, mention should be made of such *ENCJ* working topics as the attractiveness of a judicial career and judicial disciplinary responsibility. In 2024, drawing inspiration from the *ENCJ*'s recommendations for promoting the attractiveness of a judicial career, a large-scale inter-institutional seminar was organised in Kyiv, which was also attended in person by the then Chair of the *ENCJ* Board, Dalia Vasariene, and Solvita Harbaceviča, Adviser to the President of the Supreme Court.

Building on these enhanced contacts within the context of the ENCJ, in 2025 the Judicial Council was able to establish a bilateral cooperation programme and invite a Ukrainian delegation to Riga, jointly organising the seminar 'Strengthening the Rule of Law in Challenging Times: A Dialogue between the Courts of Latvia and Ukraine', aimed at promoting the exchange of professional experience between representatives of the judiciary of both countries and strengthening the rule of law as the foundation of a democratic state.

The Ukrainian colleagues wished to focus the dialogue on practical issues relating to the judicial system and the organisation of the courts' work. Consequently, as part of the programme, the parties briefed each other on their respective regulations governing the selection and career progression of judges, as well as on the functioning of their qualification, ethical and disciplinary systems. Our Ukrainian colleagues were interested in the principles and regulations governing the territorial distribution of courts, as well as jurisdiction and the redistribution of cases between courts. The Ukrainians were also keen to learn more about Latvia's experience in organising online court hearings. Both of these aspects are important for Ukraine in wartime, potentially providing the judicial system with flexibility in situations where court buildings may be located in occupied territory or where the conduct of court hearings is hampered by air raid alerts.

In turn, at the request of the Latvian side, our Ukrainian colleagues prepared two comprehensive presentations on the organisation of court proceedings during wartime and on developments in criminal law and criminal procedure in Ukraine since February 2022. Colleagues from the Ministries of Defence and Justice, the Office of the Prosecutor-General and the Court Administration also took part in the discussion of these topics. The experience of our Ukrainian colleagues and the conclusions drawn from it are of great significance to Latvia, as they help prepare for crisis situations – which, it is hoped, will never arise – by ensuring both a nuanced legal framework and well-developed contingency plans to guarantee the continuity of judicial proceedings and the safety of judges and court staff.

At the end of the visit, together with our Ukrainian colleagues, we visited the Kurzemes and Zemgales District Courts – the Kuldīga and Tukums courthouses respectively – where our colleagues were able to gain practical insight into the organisation of court work in the regions, the operation of e-cases and the conduct of court hearings online. During the regional visits, the Ukrainian colleagues had the opportunity to meet with members of the Judicial Council – Madars Plepis, President of the

Kurzeme District Court, and Juris Siliņš, President of the Zemgale Regional Court – as well as with Iveta Salaka, President of the Zemgale District Court, and Adrija Kasakovska, Vice-President of the Court and member of the Judicial Ethics Commission.

With a view to deepening bilateral contacts, a cooperation agreement was signed between the two Councils of the Judiciary during the visit, confirming both institutions' intention to strengthen mutual cooperation and support the Ukrainian judiciary's preparations for accession to the European Union. The forms of cooperation selected under the agreement include regular consultations on topics of interest to both Councils for the Judiciary, the exchange of information, joint research projects, and mutual invitations for the parties to participate in various seminars, conferences or meetings organised by each other. The parties may also draw up annual cooperation programmes.

At the end of 2025, the Judicial Council received an invitation from the Moldovan Judicial Council to conclude a memorandum of cooperation between the Councils for the Judiciary of both countries. It is possible that, in the coming years, further cooperation may also take place in a trilateral format.

Project: 'Improving the efficiency and budget planning of the Latvian court system'

(EU Technical Assistance Instrument, implemented by 'PricewaterhouseCoopers')

In September 2024, with funding from the European Union's Technical Assistance Instrument, "PricewaterhouseCoopers Latvia" launched the 18-month project 'Improving the efficiency and budget planning of the Latvian court system'. In 2025, PwC developed and presented several deliverables to the Judicial Council.

Deliverable 1: 'Initial Report'

The document provides general statistics on the structure and cost items of the Latvian court system, as well as describing the planned course of the project and providing an initial comparison with three countries with best practice, whose experience can offer valuable insights into improving the efficiency of the judicial system – Estonia, Finland and the Netherlands.

Deliverable 2: 'Communication Material'

Deliverable 3: 'Analytical Report'

The report's main conclusions can be divided into three parts: aligning strategic objectives with society's expectations and amongst all stakeholders; opportunities for improving the governance of the judiciary; and issues relating to enhancing the efficiency of the judicial system. Key findings from PwC's report of 8 May 2025 (excerpt):

- In the model of court administration led by the executive, there are significant organisational barriers to strategic long-term planning of court operations, as there is a 'mismatch' between the executive's policies and the operational needs of the courts.
- Overall, the management of the court system in Latvia is fragmented and has several organisational centres:

- many operational matters are handled either by the Judicial Council or by the executive branch, in the form of the Ministry of Justice, the Minister of Justice or the Court Administration. In order to improve operational efficiency and provide meaningful professional support to judges in their judicial work, the model for the administration of the judiciary must be simplified. The preferred solution would be to integrate the organisational units of the judiciary and other stakeholders into a single hierarchical framework, managed entirely by the Judicial Council. This would enable the judiciary, with the support of the Court Administration and the Judicial Council, to operate as a single entity with common objectives.
- The current operational efficiency issues within the Judicial Council create an urgent need to review the Council's composition and areas of responsibility. There are several possible courses of action: (1) To amend the areas of responsibility of the Judicial Council, including by reducing its workload in relation to matters of the administrative management of the courts; (2) Distinguish between different levels of decision-making or the composition of voting members within the Judicial Council; (3) Change the composition of the Judicial Council, giving priority to excluding political office-holders from its membership.
- Each continuation of a hearing on the merits of a case increases the workload of all parties involved by 12–24 per cent. In order to measure the proportion of cases in which the examination of the merits is completed at the first hearing, it is necessary, for the purposes of improving judicial efficiency, to record data separately for the first and subsequent court hearings. Another efficiency target that should be aimed for is that, for example, at least 90 per cent of cases should have an interval between the first hearing on the merits and subsequent hearings or other significant procedural steps not exceeding 45 calendar days or another number of days set by the courts.
- The centralisation of decision-making and the enforced standardisation of work organisation within the court system undermine the autonomy of judicial institutions. The absence of an administrative management structure to support the presiding judge in Latvian courts, combined with centralised resource management has created a situation where judicial institutions are not accountable either for budget planning and the efficient use of funds, or for seeking solutions to improve efficiency within the constraints of existing resources. As a result, centralised plans are

overly conservative; to be on the safe side, resource users demand reserve resources, which can lead to underutilisation of resources.

- The remuneration of first-instance judges, when compared with the monthly salaries of judges in other Baltic states, such as Estonia, is as much as 30 per cent lower and is currently no longer commensurate with the extent of the responsibilities entrusted to judges and the level of risk associated with the post. Latvian authorities point out that the level of the monthly salary is influenced by the fact that judges in Latvia are entitled to post-employment benefits – a service pension, whereas, for example, in Estonia, since 2013, judges have been entitled only to the general state pension in accordance with the National Pension Insurance Act. The issue of judges' remuneration is particularly relevant in the context of the development of the institution of judicial assistants. Good practice dictates that judicial assistants' remuneration should be set at approximately 50 per cent of a judge's salary; however, in Latvia, this level of remuneration is not competitive enough to attract qualified lawyers.

Deliverable 4: 'Recommendations for institutional reforms to enhance the efficiency of the judicial system and promote a more effective use of budgetary resources'

Key conclusions/proposals from PwC Report of 5 September 2025 (excerpt):

- There is no effective judicial self-governance in matters relating to the budget and the organisation and support to the delivery of justice, which adversely affects the independence of the courts and efficiency of their activities. Over time, the Court Administration – and, to some extent, the Judicial Council – has lost its focus on ensuring the functioning of the courts. Some of the judicial authorities' responsibilities fall within the remit of other institutions; for example, all matters relating to the planning and expenditure of the judicial authorities' budget are the responsibility of the Court Administration.

The objective set by the Judicial Council is to achieve the fiscal independence of the judicial system as a constitutional institution. Proposed solution: Phase 1. Transition period: Partially independent budgetary management of the judiciary until 2028. Phase 2. Independent and modern administrative management of the judiciary, adapted to the needs of the judicial process, from 2028.

- To prevent the self-isolation of judges or to ensure expertise independent of the judiciary – for example, regarding the efficient use of state budget funds – at least some members of the Judicial Council should represent sectors unrelated to the judiciary. There could be several possible scenarios: (1) Separate the various levels of decision-making or the composition of permanent (voting) members within the Judicial Council; (2) Change the composition of the Judicial Council.
- Recommendation on optimising the use of courthouses: close courthouses where no more than three judicial posts are provided for, except in specific cases where, for the purposes of the economical use of courthouse space, it is recommended to consolidate judicial posts within a single courthouse.
- Establish differentiated judicial assistant posts: Option 1. Increase the remuneration for all judicial assistants. Option 2. Create different categories of judicial assistant posts: 1) judicial assistant – holding a bachelor's degree in law or currently studying law; 2) court lawyer – holding a master's degree in law; 3) court research adviser (district (city court) / regional court adviser) – holding a master's degree or a doctorate in law; 4) judicial assistant with current status and remuneration.

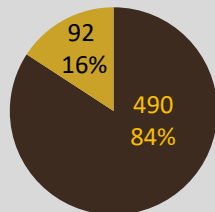
Performance Indicators

S-ALD the Supreme Court, Department of Administrative Cases
S-CLD the Supreme Court, Department of Civil Cases
S-KLD the Supreme Court, Department of Criminal Cases
AAT Administrative Regional Court
RAT Riga Regional Court
KAT Kurzeme Regional Court

LAT Latgale Regional Court
VAT Vidzeme Regional Court
ZAT Zemgale Regional Court
ART Administrative District Court
RPT Riga District Court
RRT Riga District Court

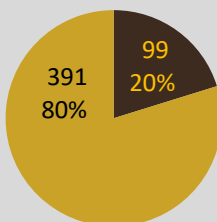
KRT Kurzeme District Court
LRT Latgale District Court
VRT Vidzeme District Court
ZRT Zemgale District Court
ELT Court of Economic Affairs

Judges & Vacancies



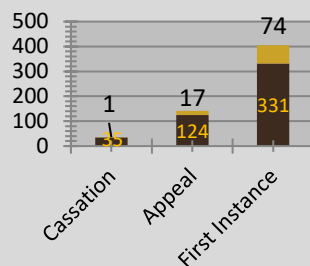
■ Judges ■ Vacancies

Gender Ratio



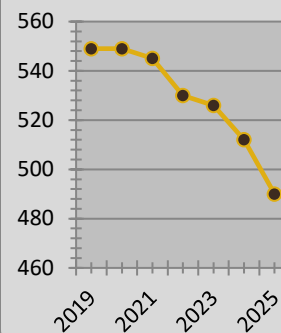
■ Male ■ Female

Number of Judges by Instance

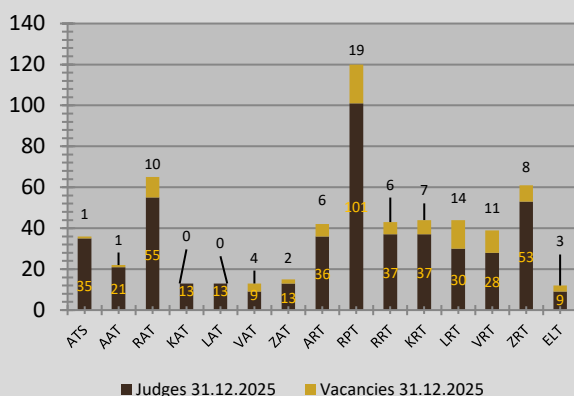


■ Judges ■ Vacancies

Number of Judges, Trend (2019-2025)

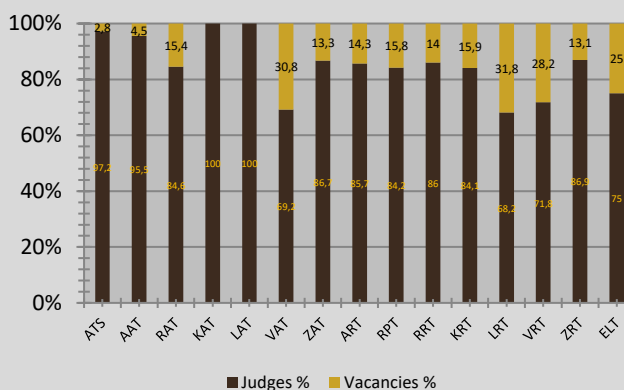


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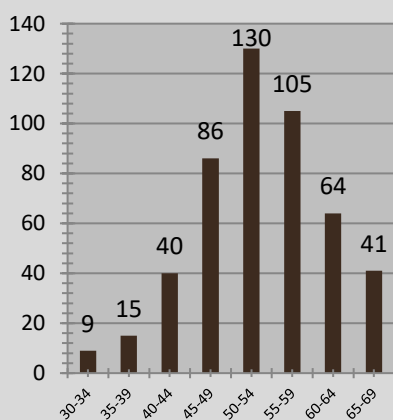
■ Judges 31.12.2025 ■ Vacancies 31.12.2025

Vacancy Rate

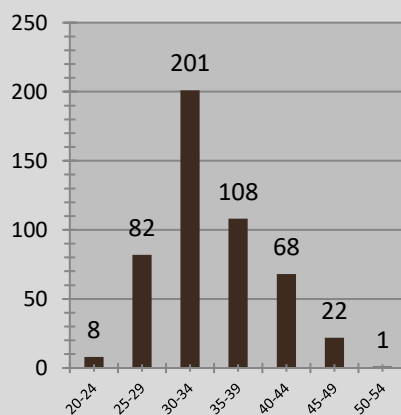


■ Judges % ■ Vacancies %

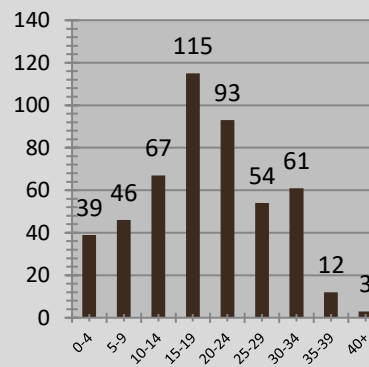
Age Distribution



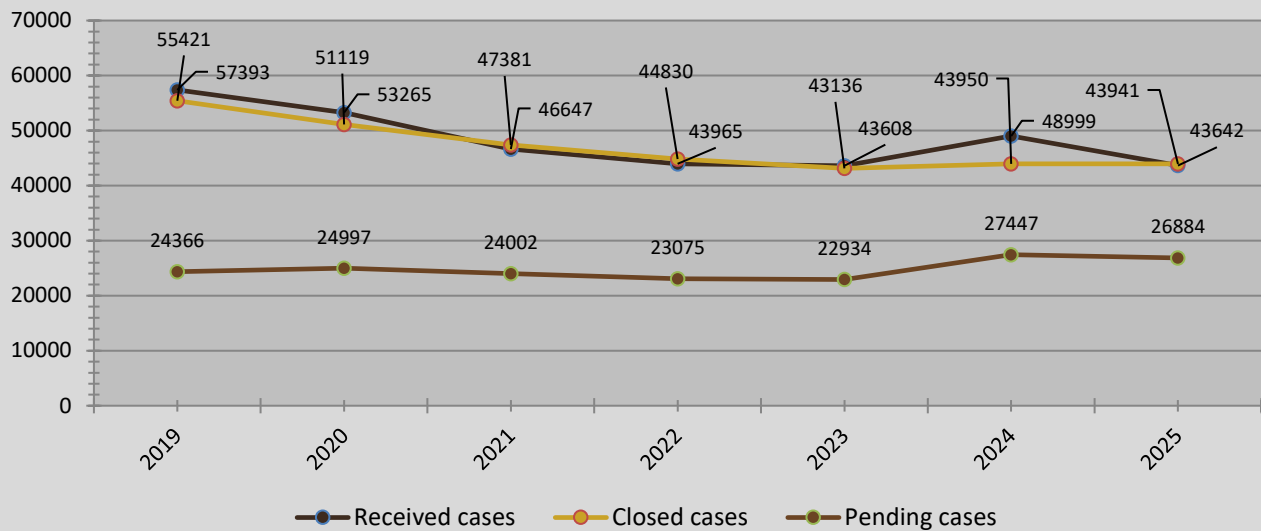
Age at Appointment



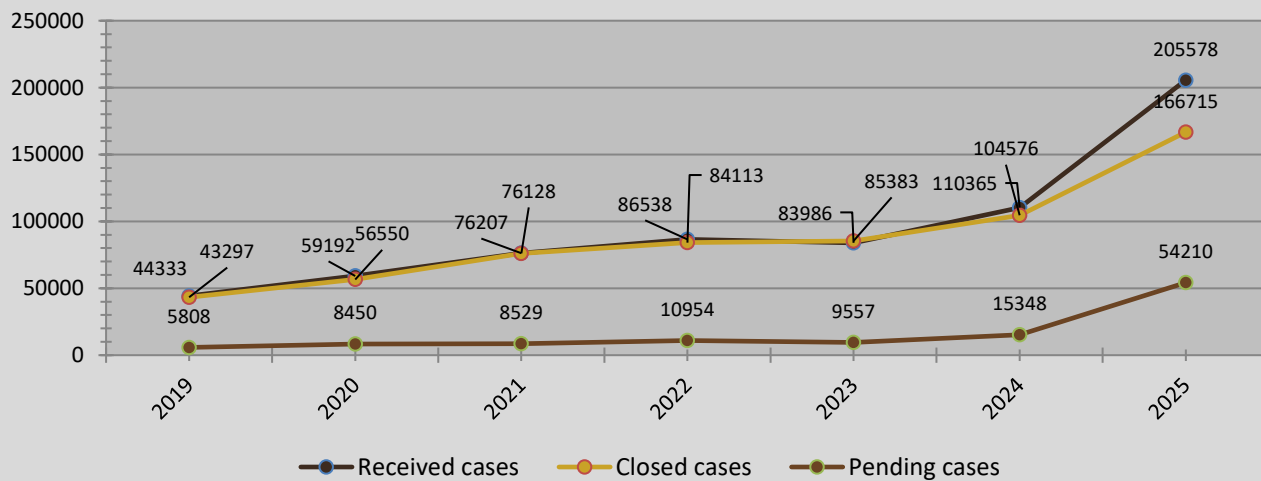
Seniority Distribution



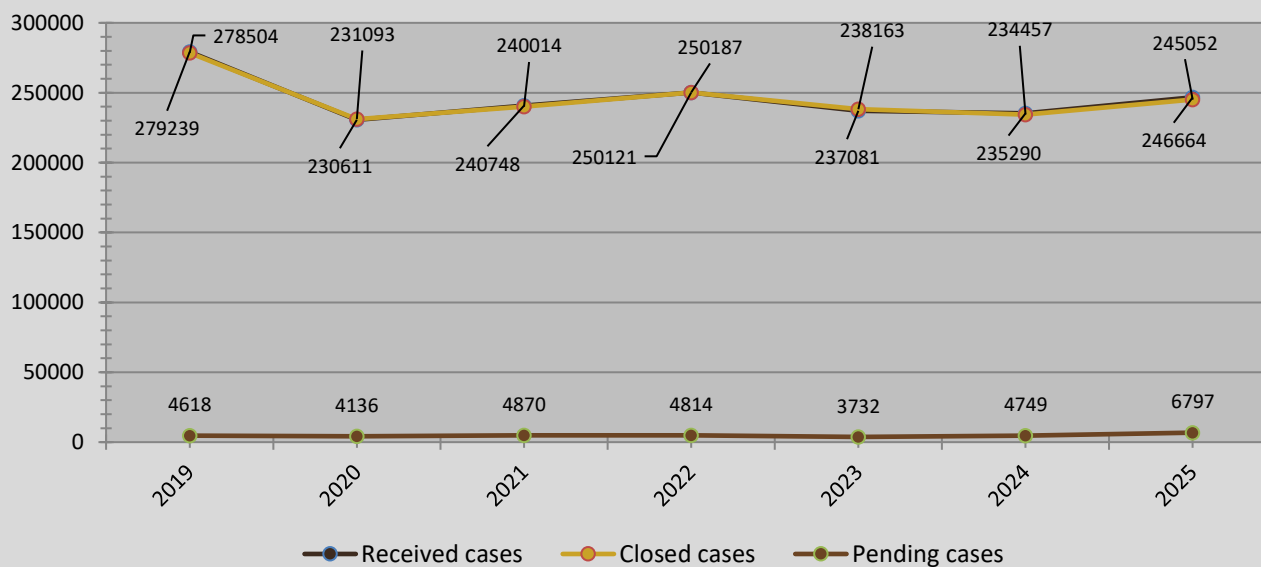
Case Turnover — Contentious Proceedings



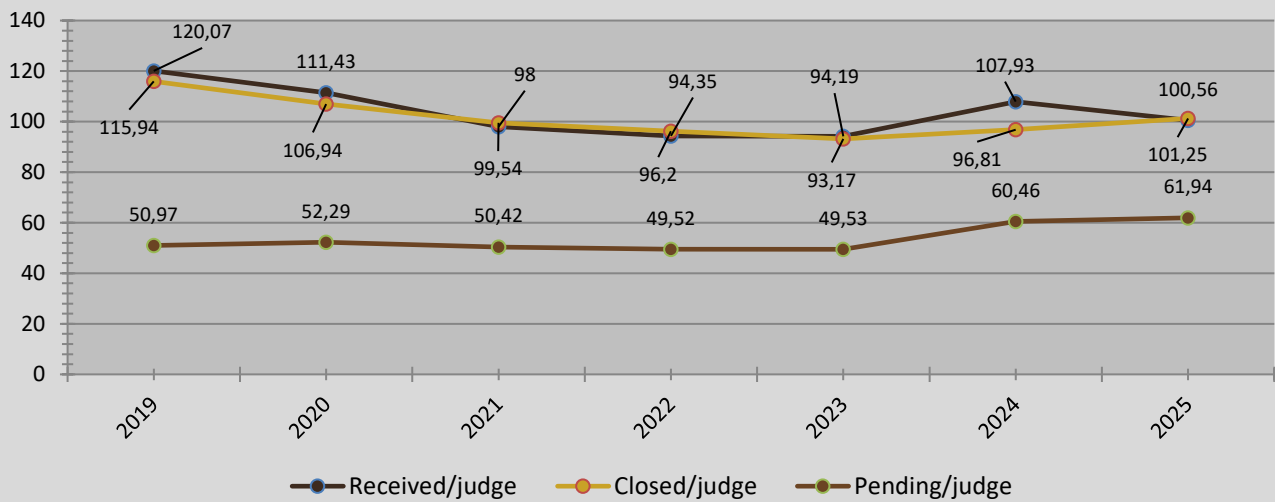
Case Turnover — Non-Contentious Proceedings



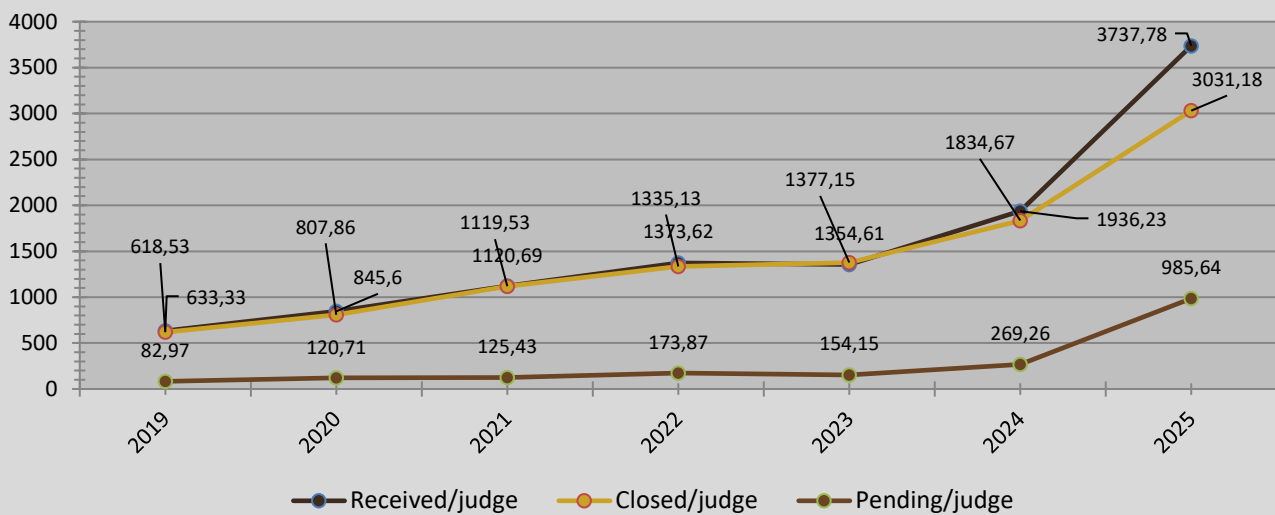
Case Turnover — Land Registry Cases



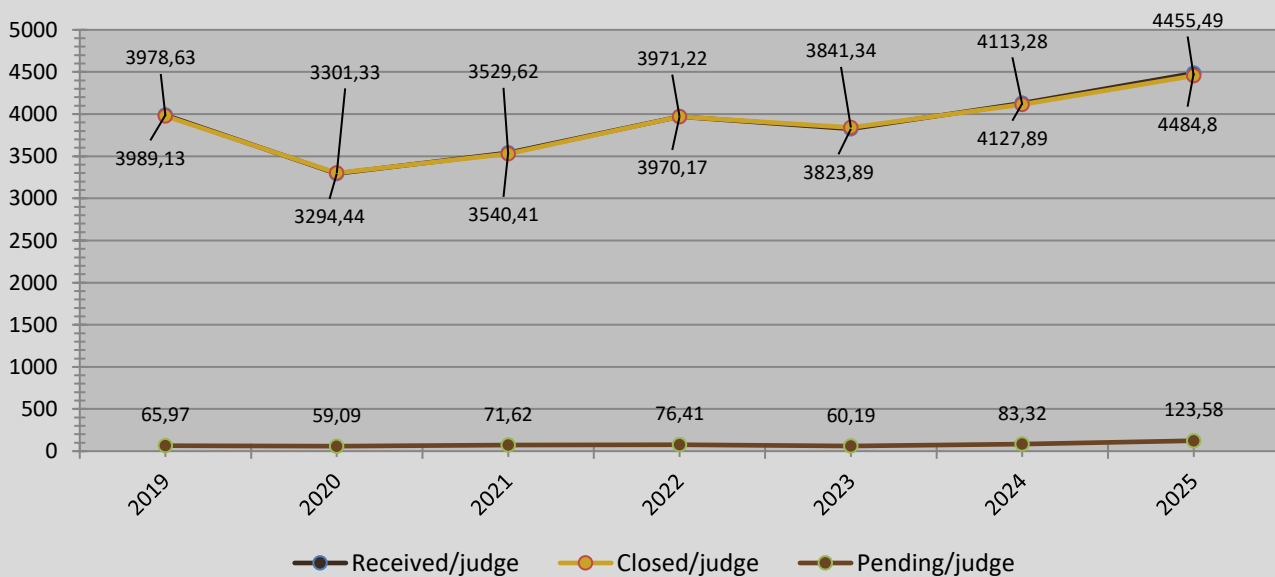
Case Turnover per Judge — Contentious Proceedings



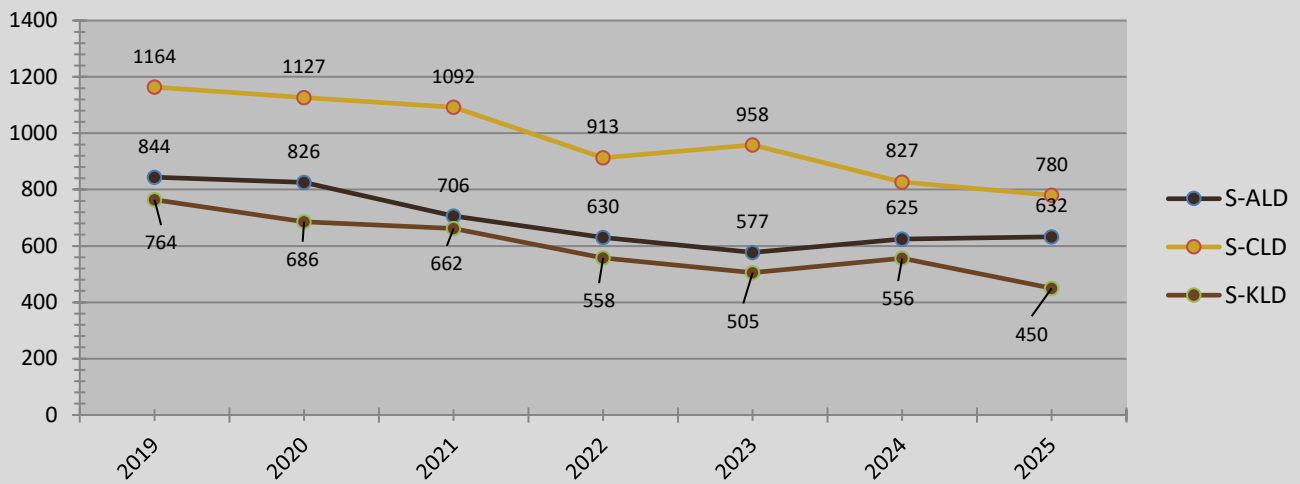
Case Turnover per Judge — Non-Contentious Proceedings



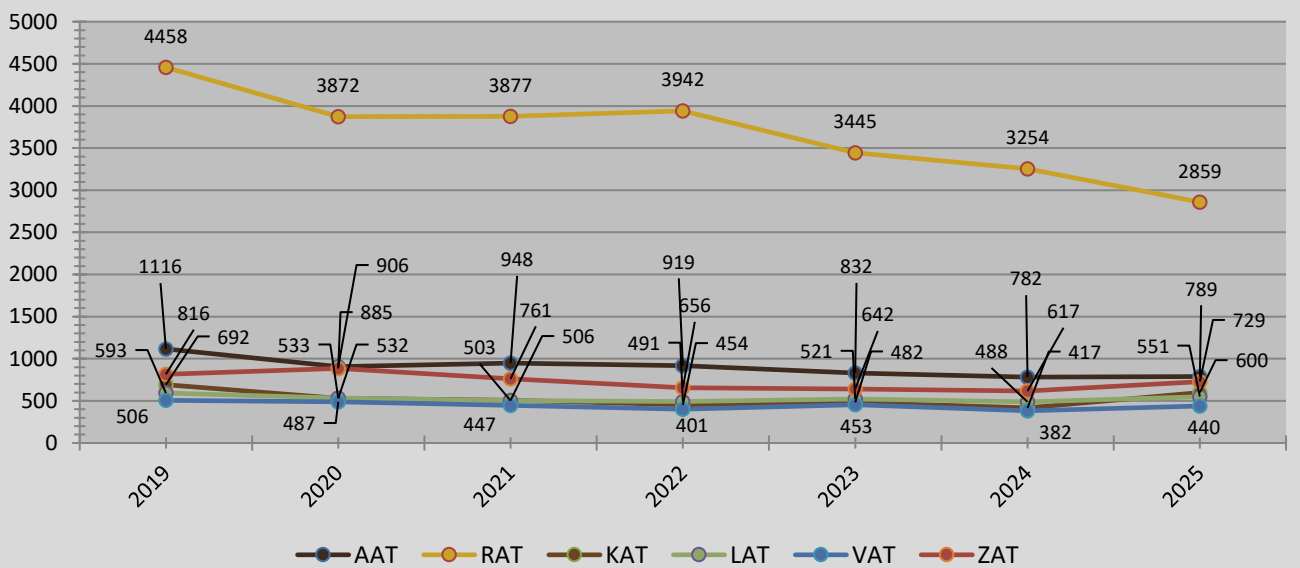
Case Turnover per Judge — Land Registry Cases



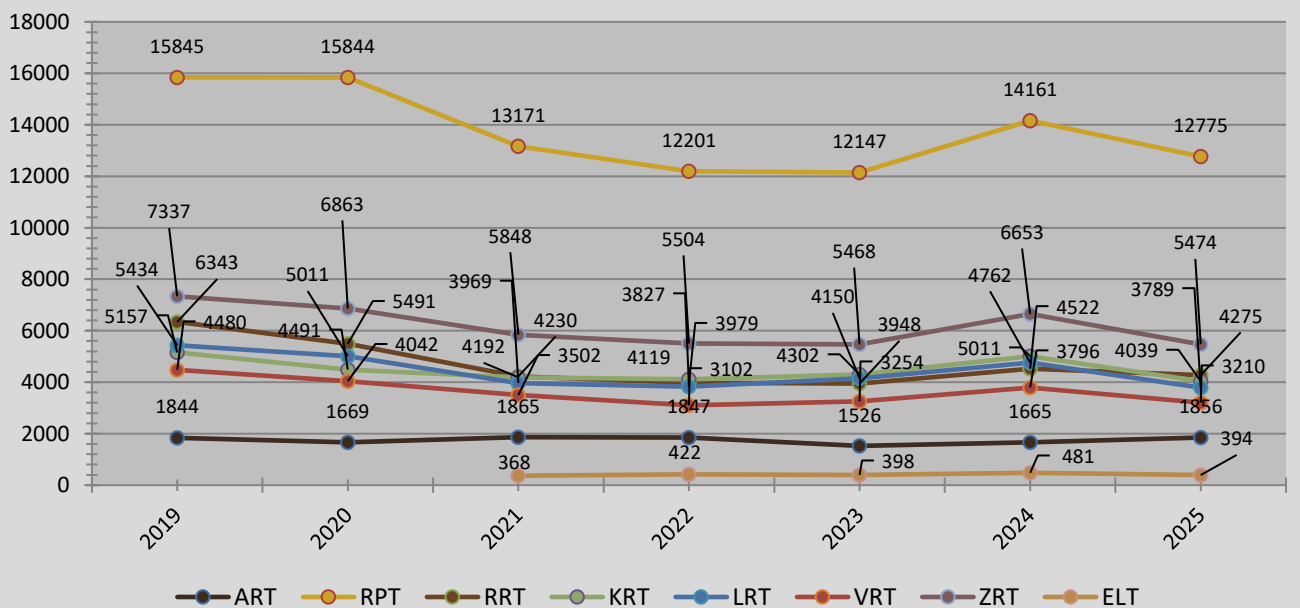
Cases Received — Cassation



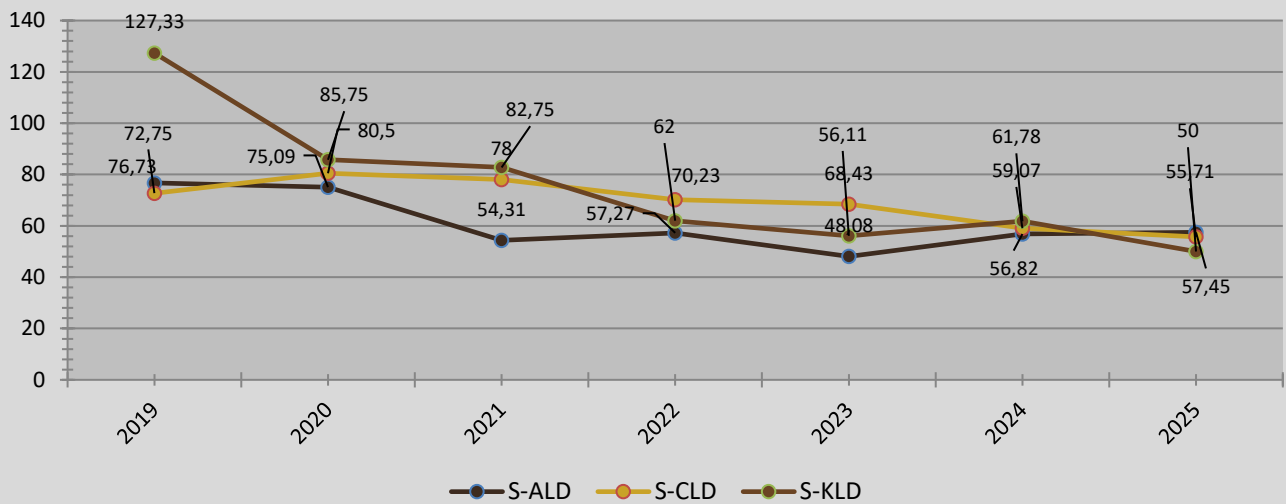
Cases Received — Appeal



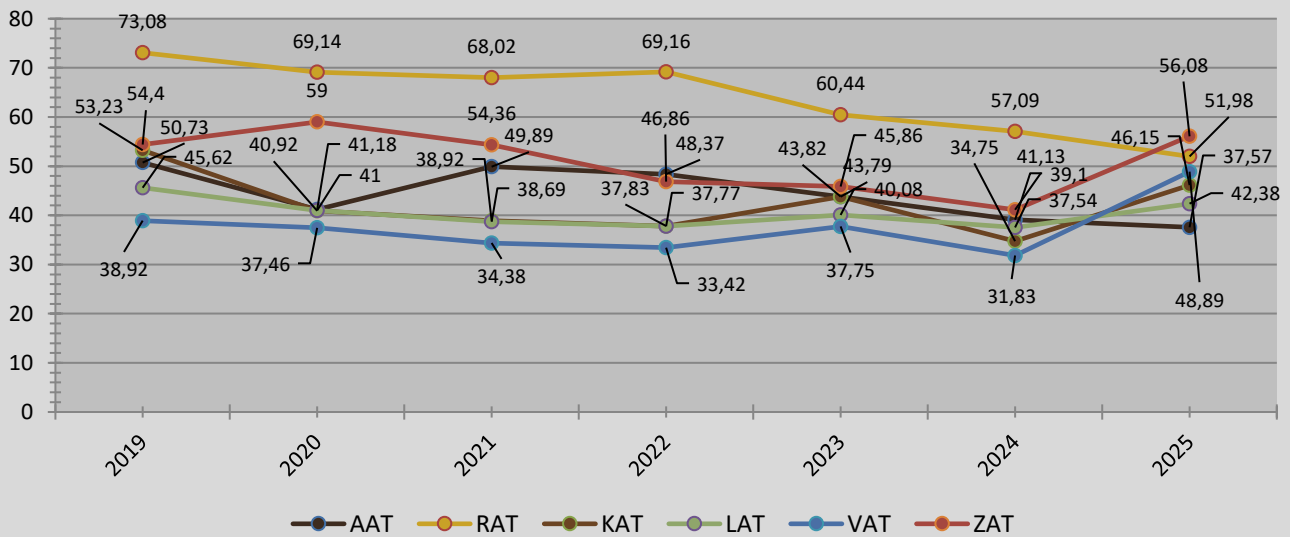
Cases Received — First Instance



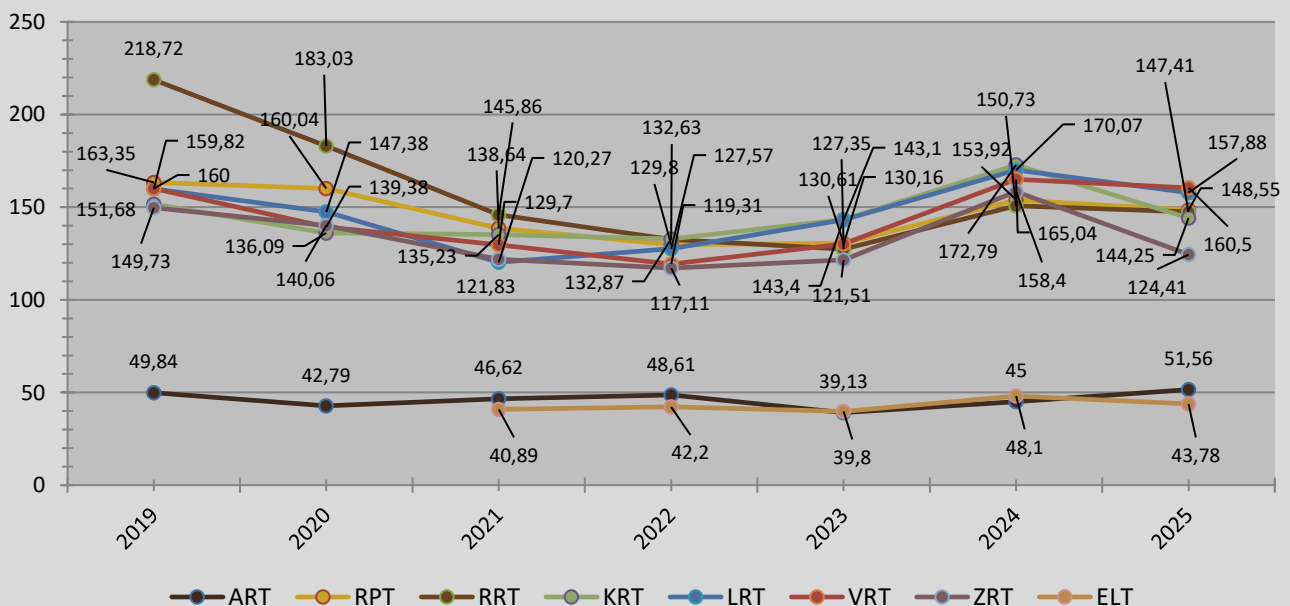
Cases Received per Judge — Cassation



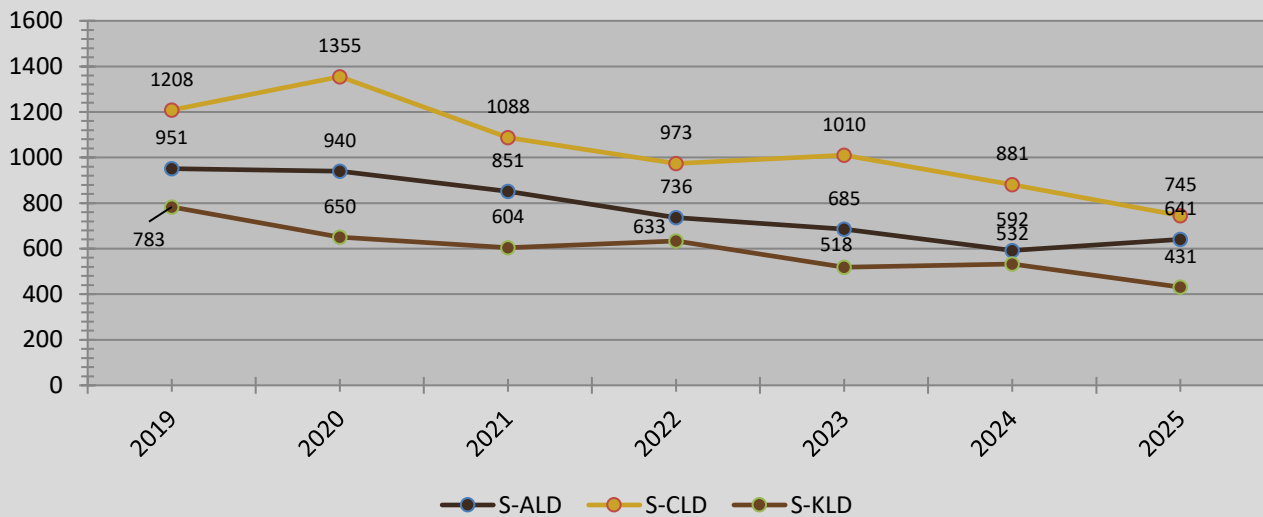
Cases Received per Judge — Appeal



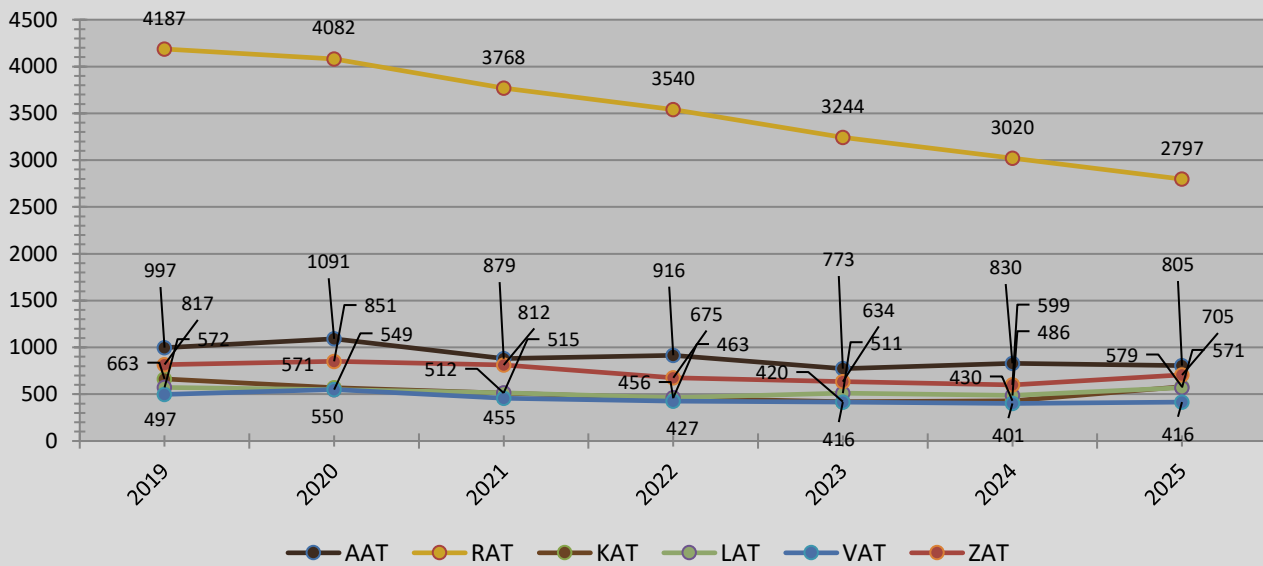
Cases Received per Judge — First Instance



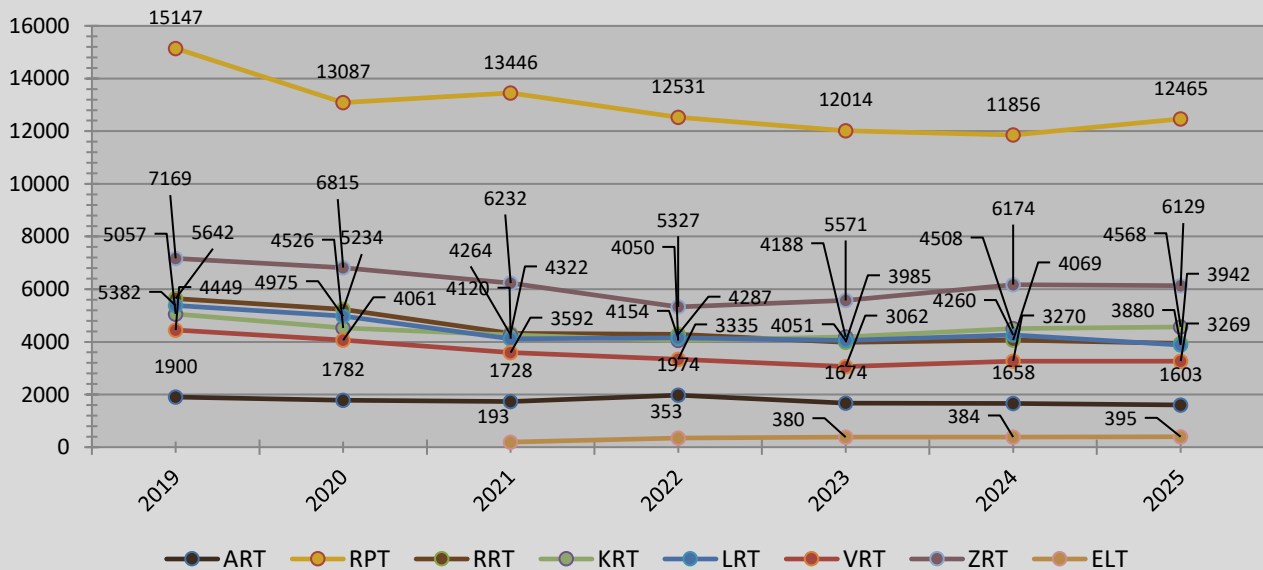
Cases Closed — Cassation



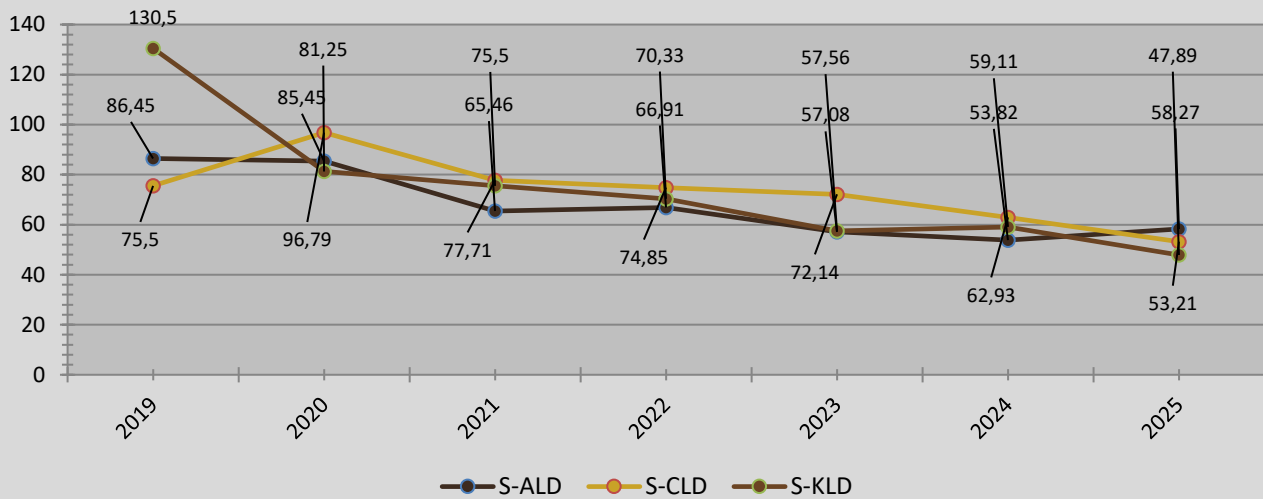
Cases Closed — Appeal



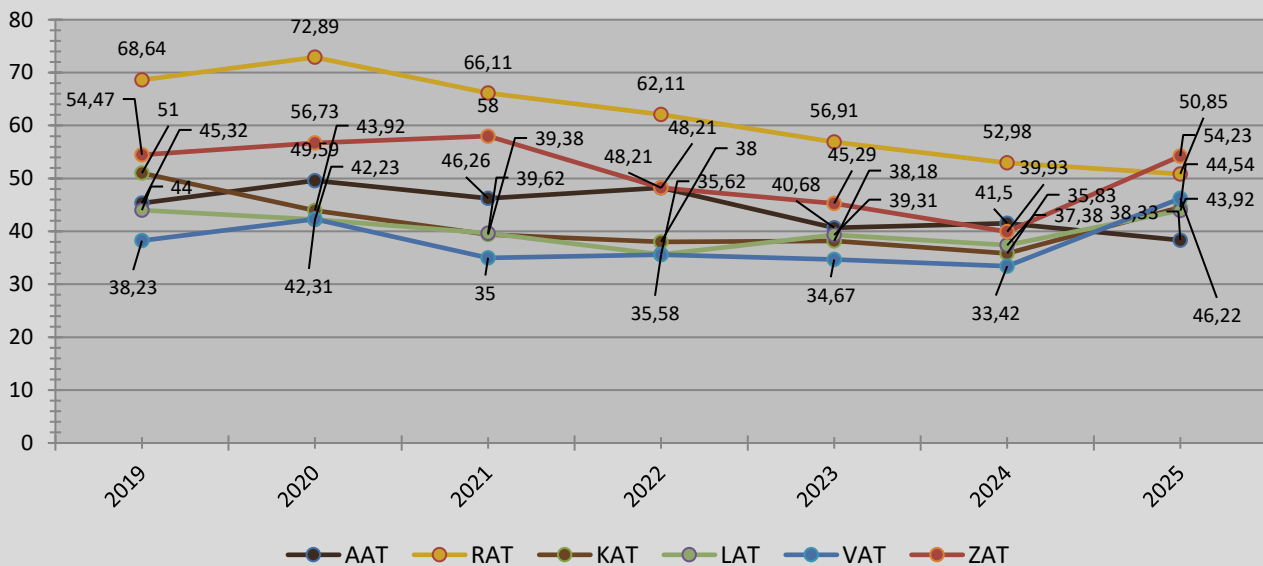
Cases Closed — First Instance



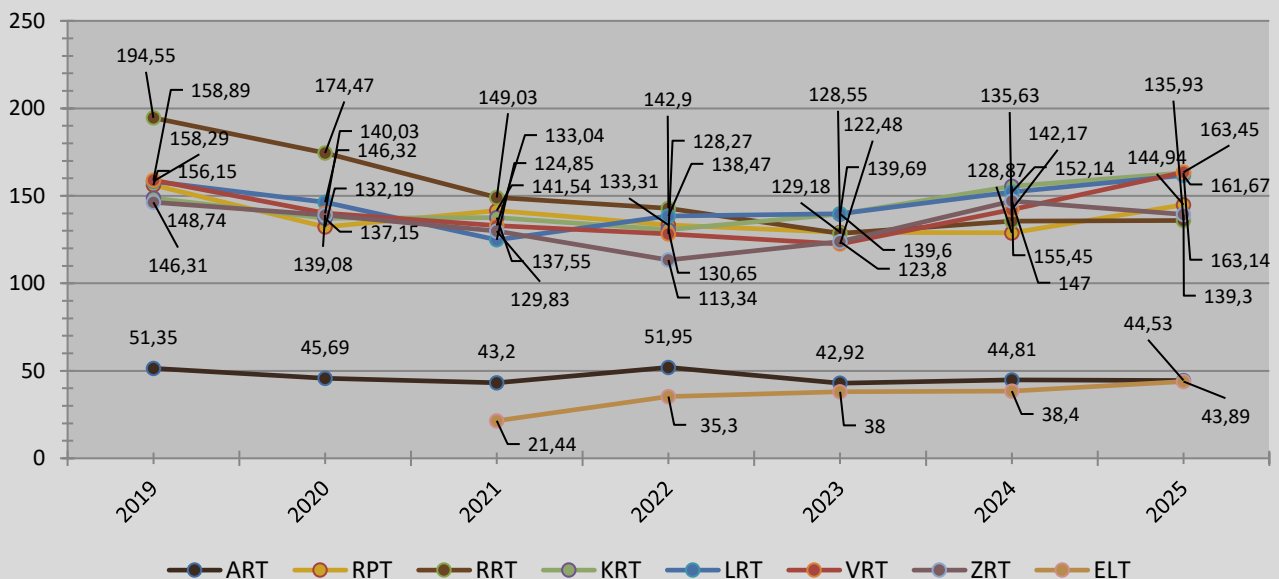
Cases Closed per Judge — Cassation



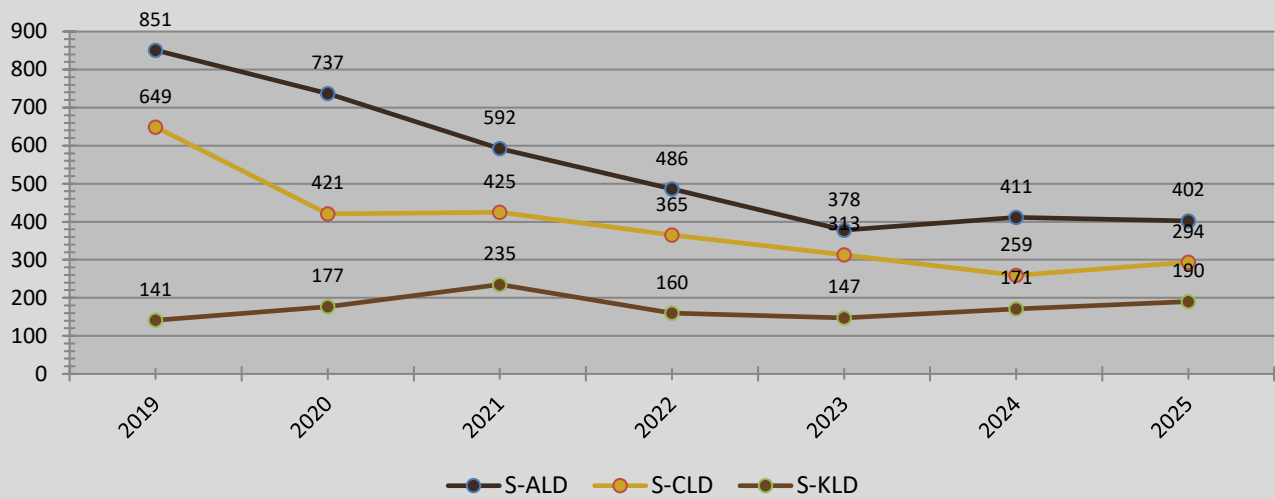
Cases Closed per Judge — Appeal



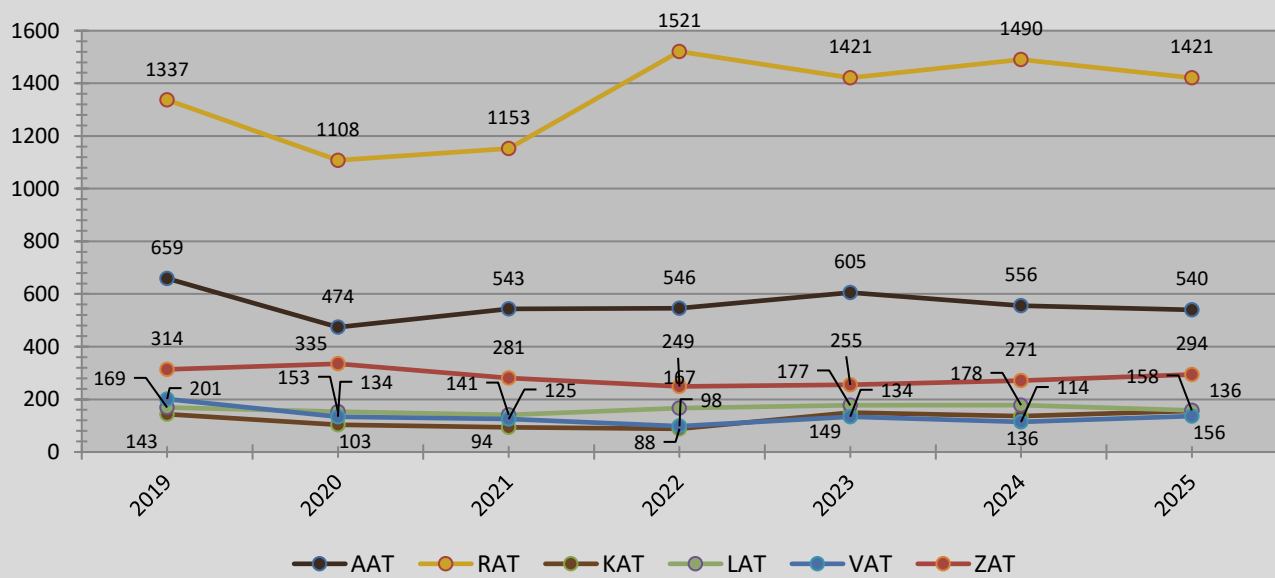
Cases Closed per Judge — First Instance



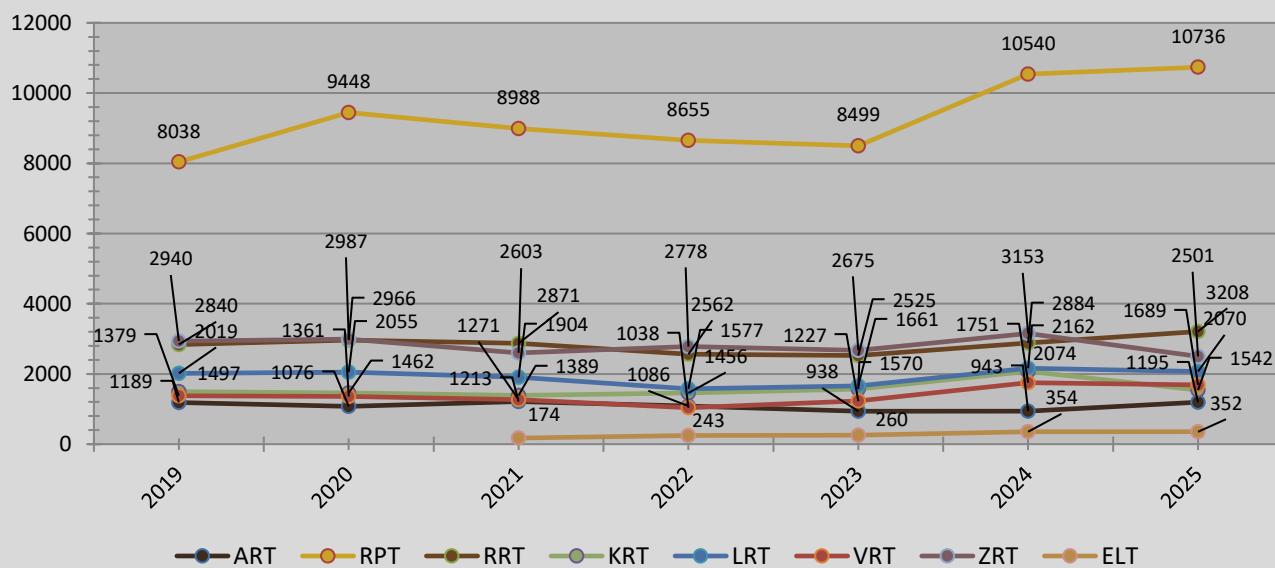
Pending Cases — Cassation



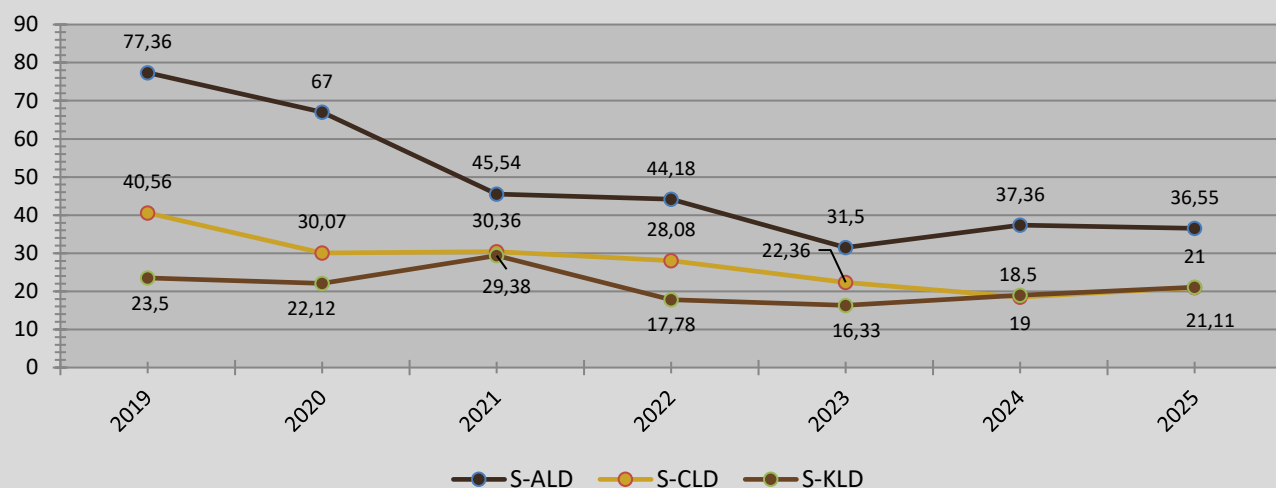
Pending Cases — Appeal



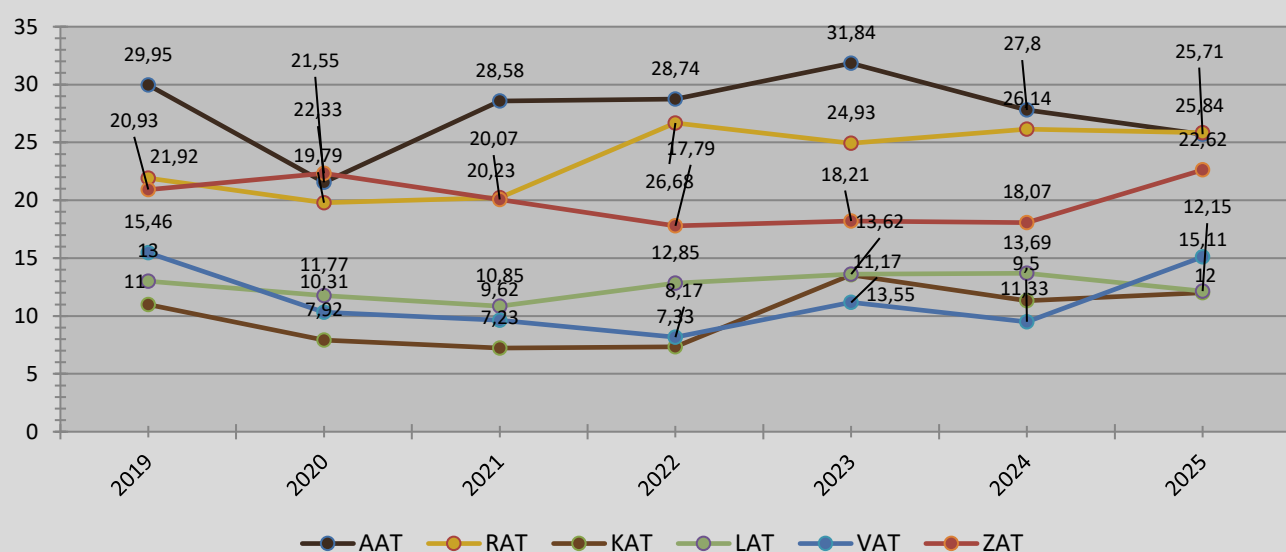
Pending Cases — First Instance



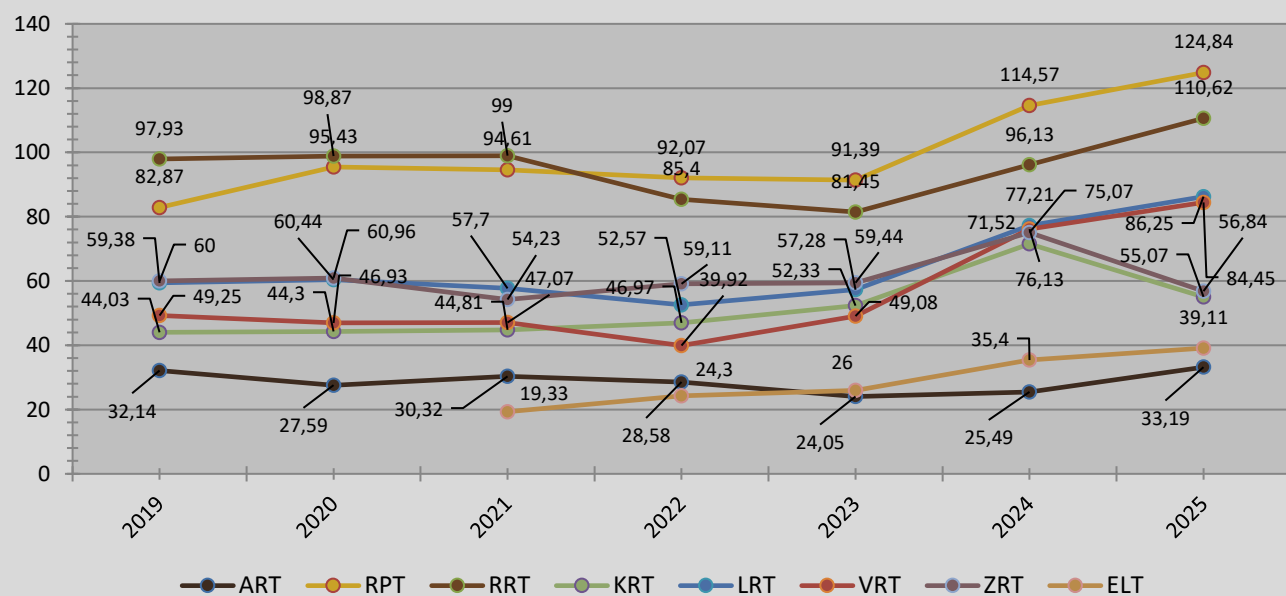
Pending Cases per Judge — Cassation



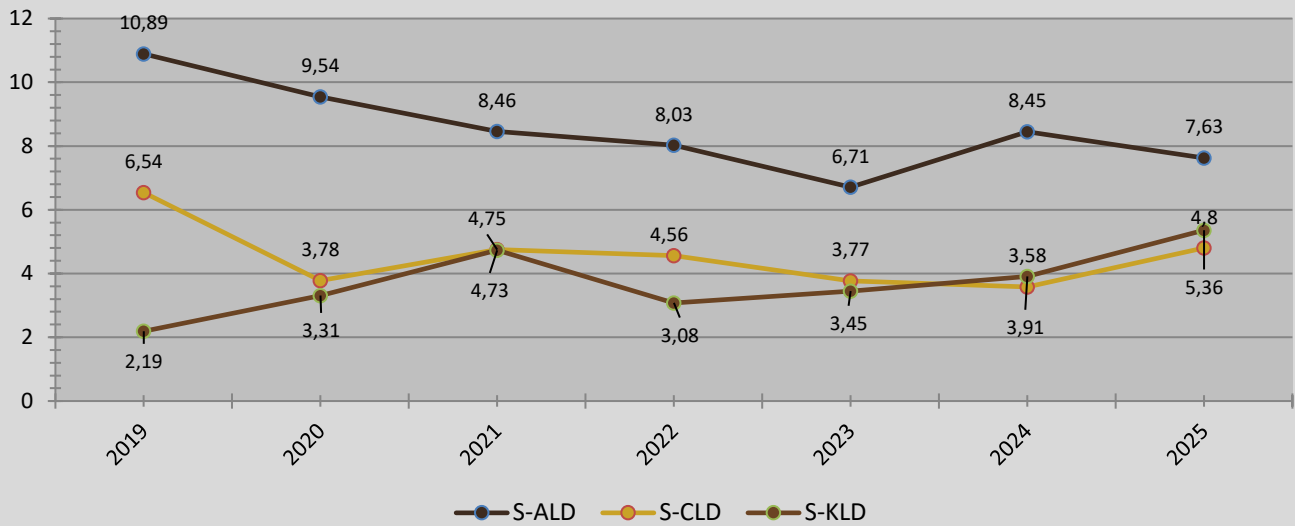
Pending Cases per Judge — Appeal



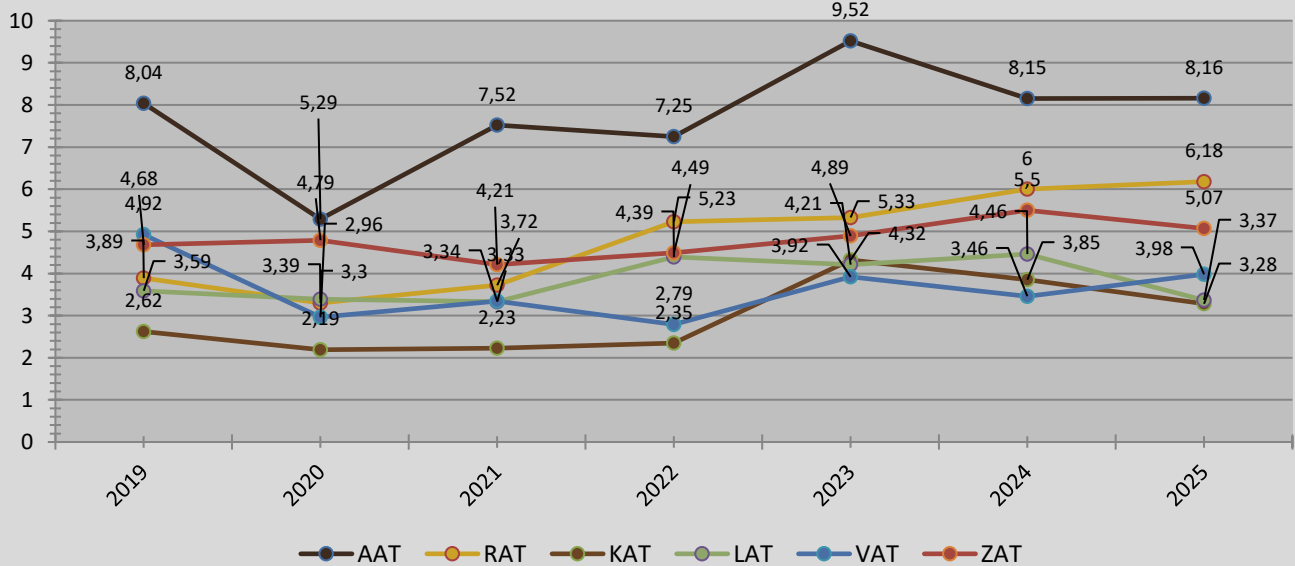
Pending Cases per Judge — First Instance



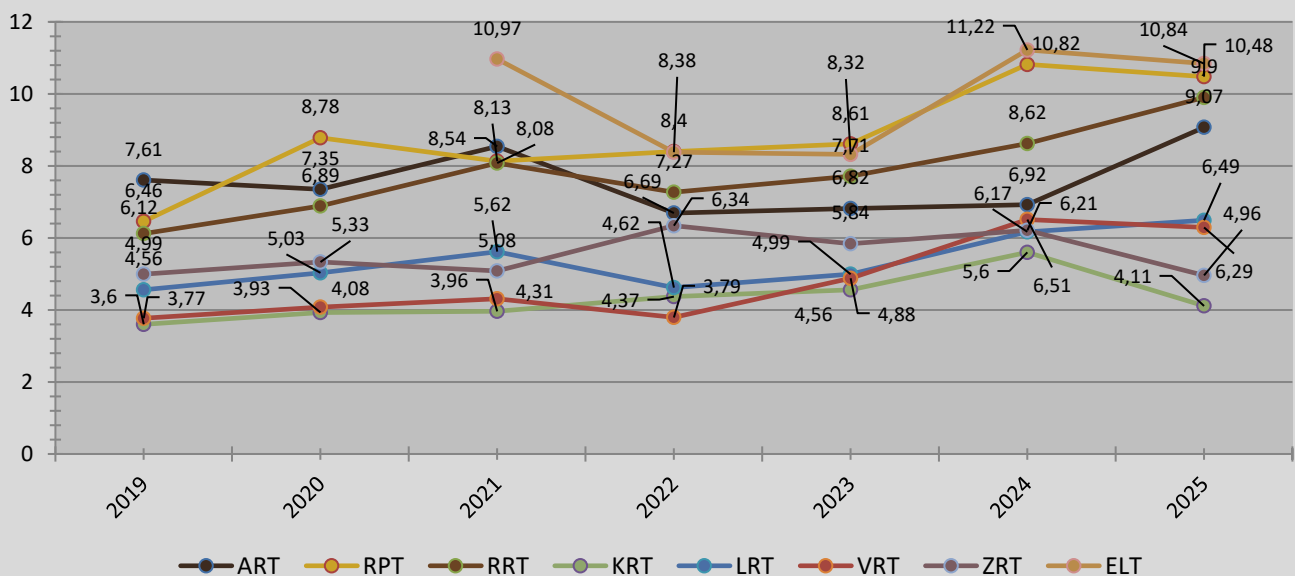
Disposition Time (months) — Cassation



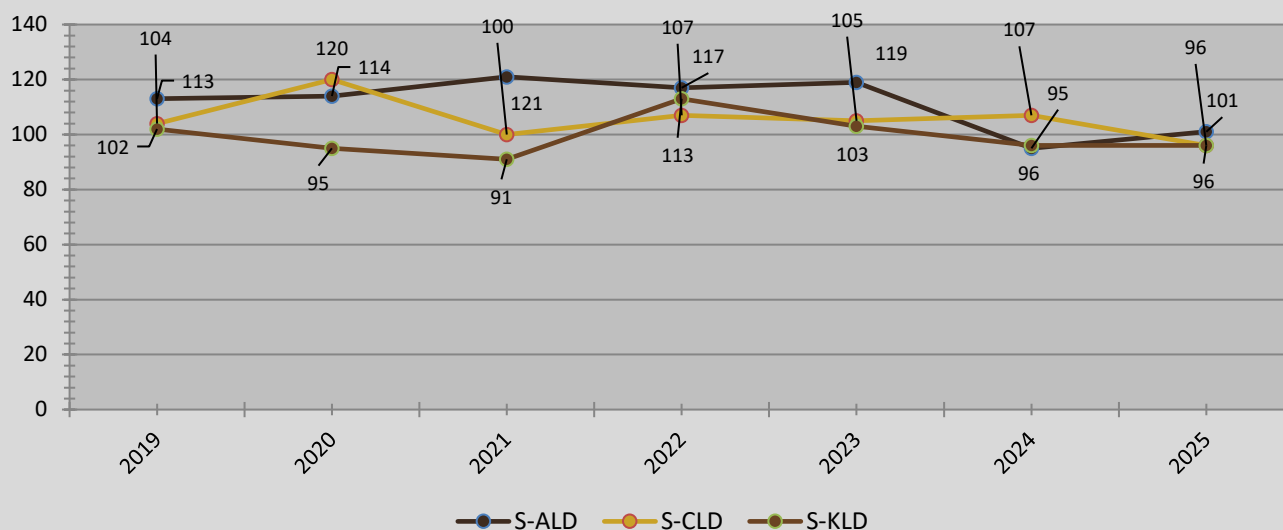
Disposition Time (months) — Appeal



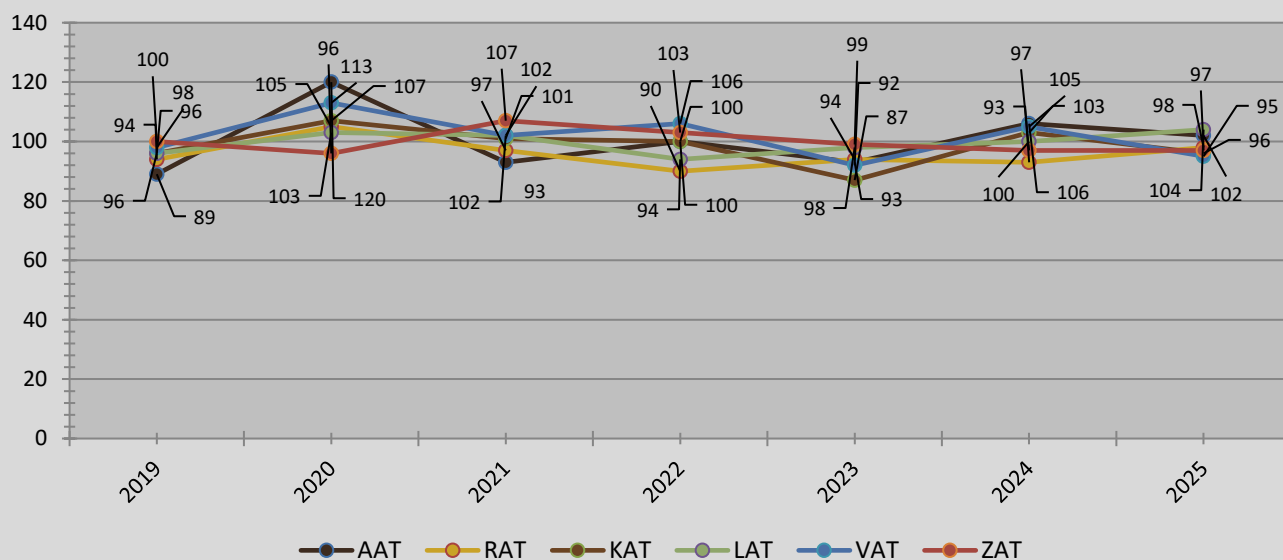
Disposition Time (months) — First Instance



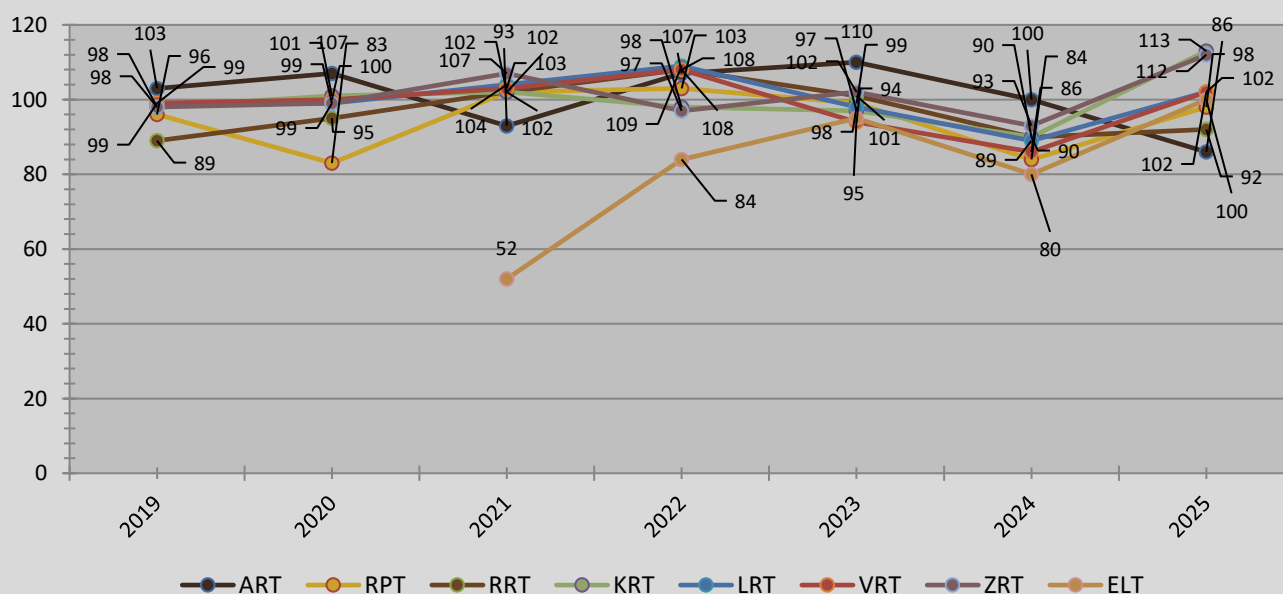
Clearance Rate (%) — Cassation



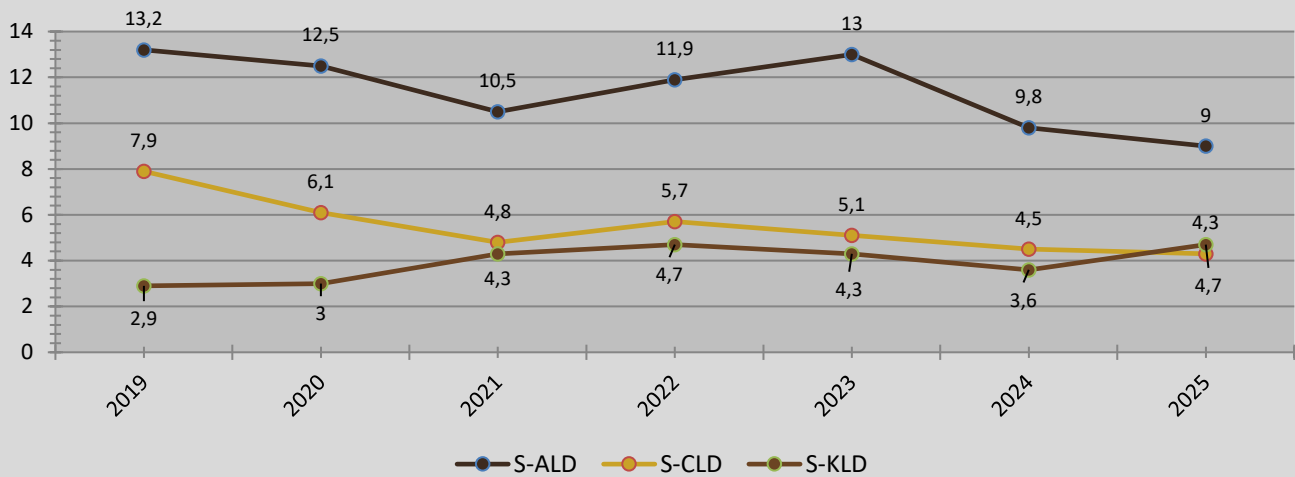
Clearance Rate (%) — Appeal



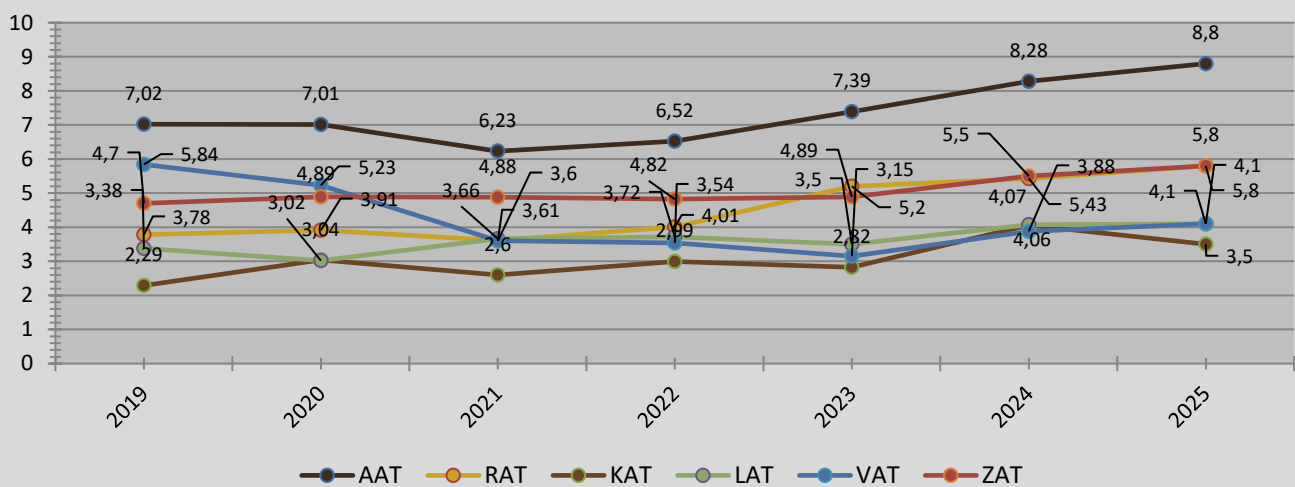
Clearance Rate (%) — First Instance



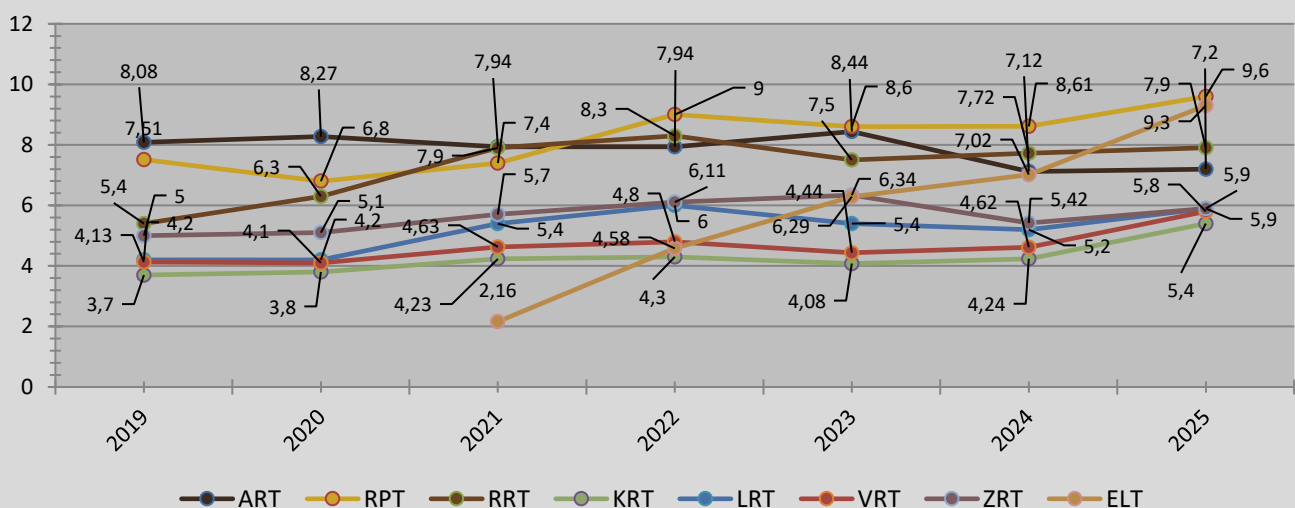
Average Time-to-Decision (months) — Cassation



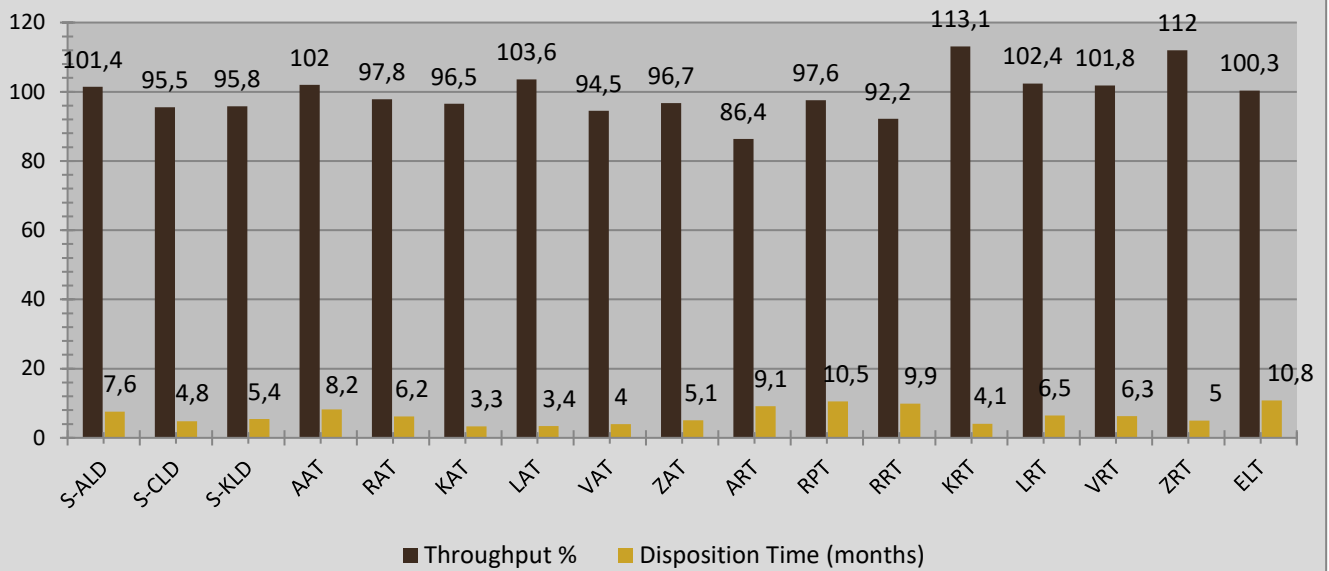
Average Time-to-Decision (months) — Appeal



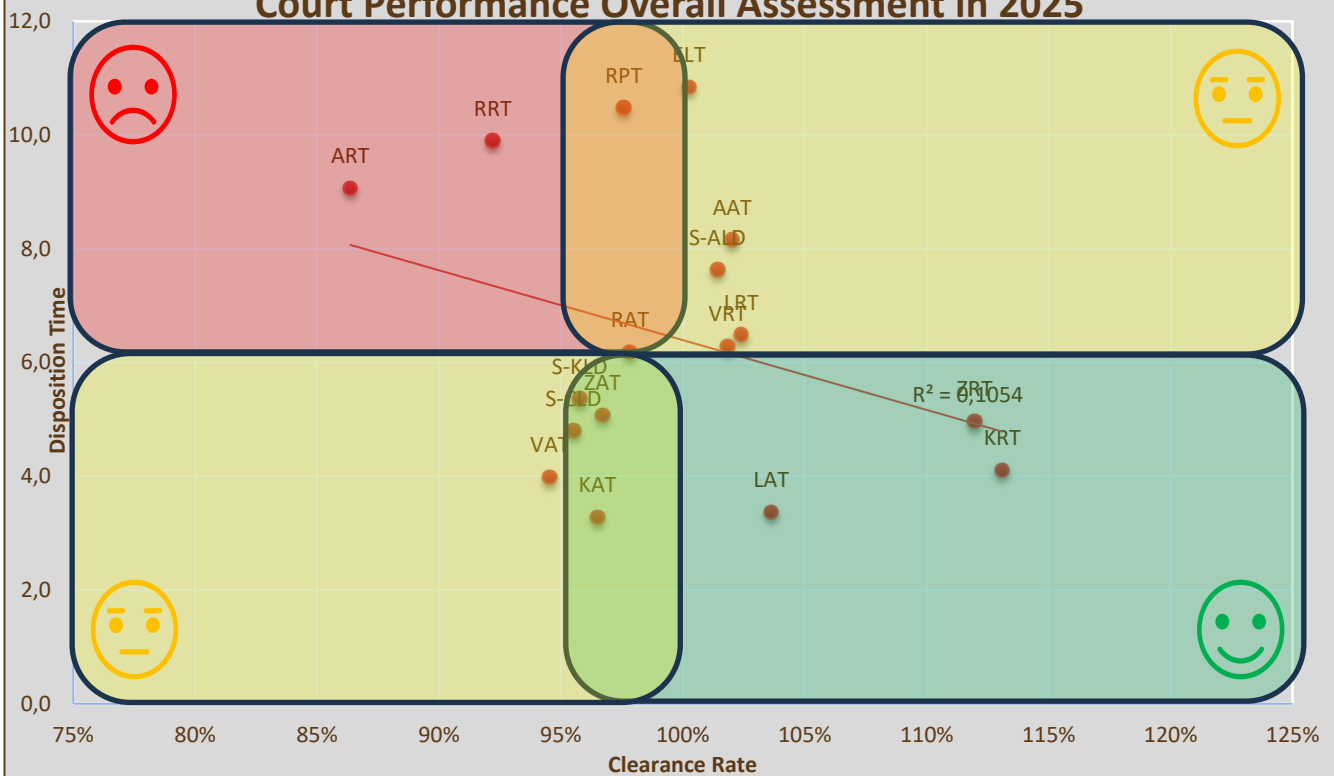
Average Time-to-Decision (months) — First Instance



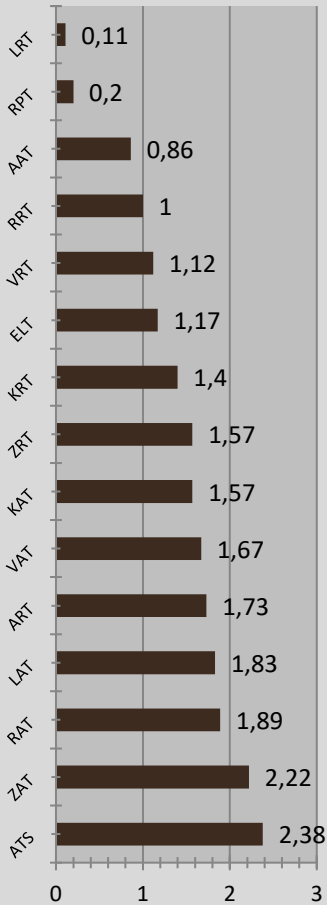
Combined Court Performance Indicators (2025)



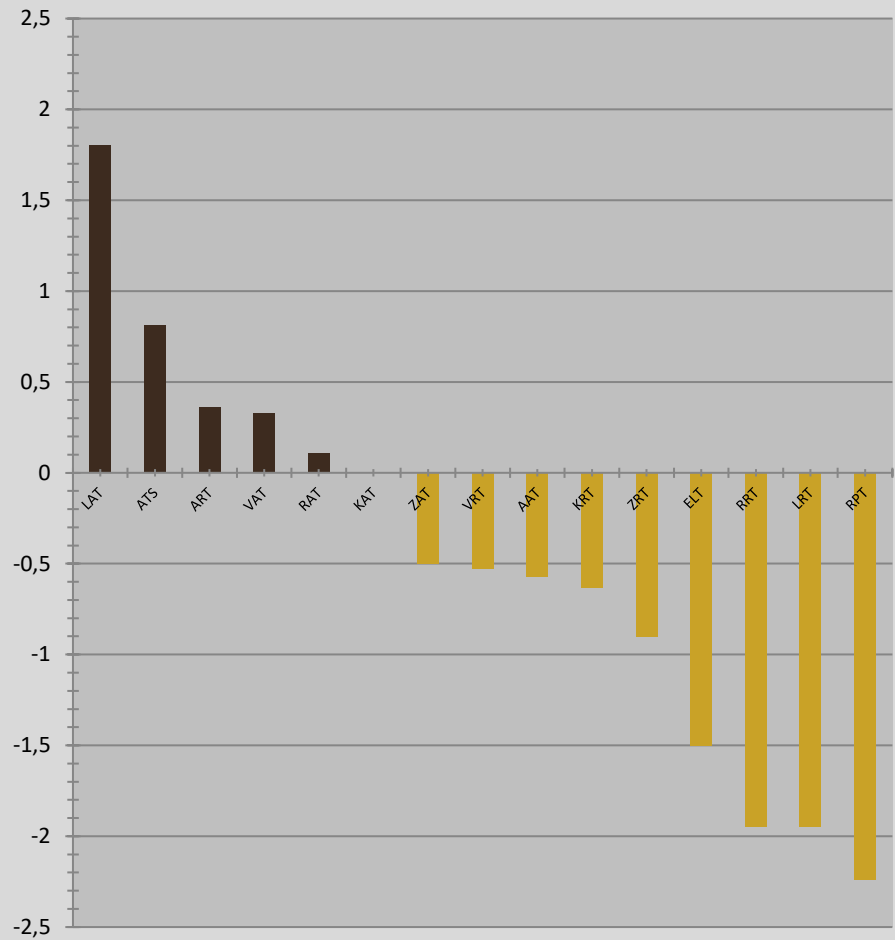
Court Performance Overall Assessment in 2025



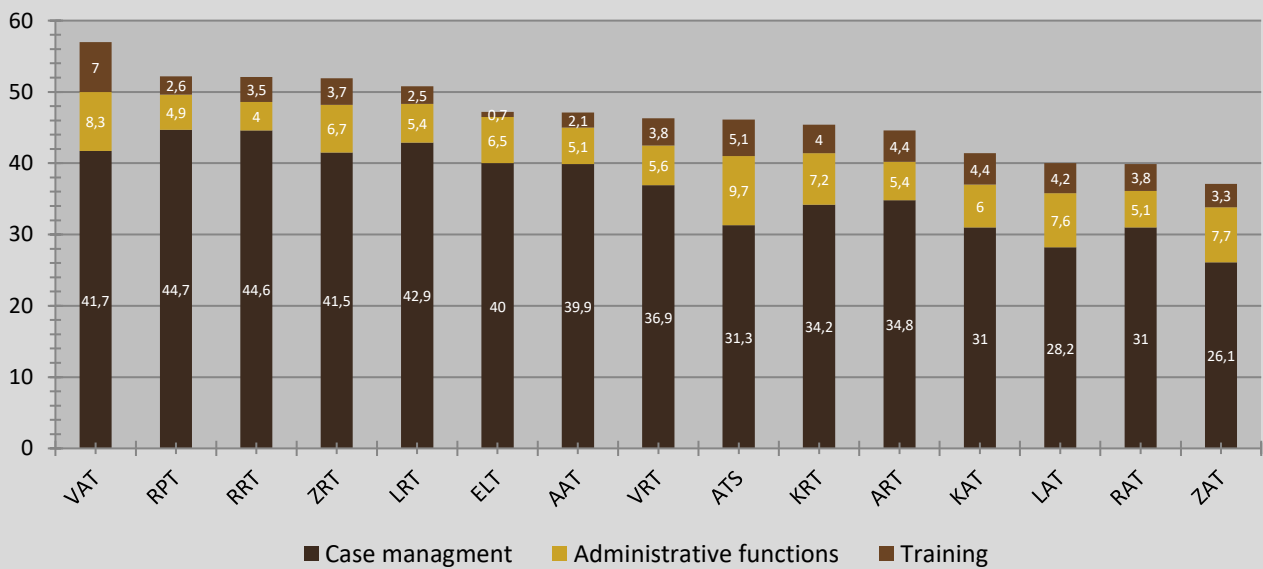
Satisfaction with Work as a Judge



Satisfaction with Workload (by court)



Self-Assessed Weekly Working Hours Breakdown



REPORTS FROM JUDICIAL SELF-GOVERNANCE BODIES

Judges' conference

The Judges' Conference is the highest body of judicial self-government, in which judges of the Supreme Court, regional courts and district (city) courts participate with voting rights. The Judges' Conference is convened by the Judicial Council. The powers of the Judges' Conference are set out in Article 92 of the Law on Judicial Power. On 16 May 2025, the Latvian Judges' Conference discussed the topic 'The efficiency of the courts: contemporary challenges'.

In his address to the conference, President Edgars Rinkēvičs emphasised that the aim of the courts is not the courts themselves, but the justice, which is based on society's shared understanding of the law. He pointed out that a judge's task is to listen to the parties' views on justice, whilst maintaining objectivity and integrity, and explaining the decisions taken to the public. The President emphasised the need to improve access to justice and legal awareness amongst the public, as justice is closely linked to public safety and trust in the state.

In her address, Minister for Justice Inese Lībiņa-Egnere emphasised public trust in the judicial system as the foundation of a democratic state. "Today, public trust in the judicial system is of critical importance – it is the cornerstone of a democratic state. We cannot allow our state order and the stability of society to be threatened by seemingly democratic methods. Therefore, in order to protect our country and its citizens, the Constitution provides for the possibility of taking special measures to safeguard democracy, including imposing criminal liability for offences that threaten national security, and to restrict disinformation through administrative decisions. I believe that truth and the rule of law will prevail, but this will only happen with the participation of us all. "Each of us has a duty to protect Latvia and to do everything possible with the resources at our disposal," said the Minister for Justice.

Judges' Conference:

1. examines current issues relating to judicial practice;
2. submits proposals to the President of the Supreme Court on issues concerning the interpretation of legal provisions which should be discussed by the Plenary Session of the Supreme Court;
3. discusses matters relating to the material and social security of judges and other significant issues concerning their work;
4. elects, by secret ballot, the members of the Judicial Council for a term of four years;
5. by secret ballot, elects the Judicial Qualifications Committee for a term of four years;
6. by secret ballot, elects the Judicial Disciplinary Board for a term of four years;
7. by secret ballot, elects the Judicial Ethics Commission for a term of four years;
8. approves the Code of Ethics for Judges.

Two Judges' Conferences were organised in 2025:

1. in-person Judges' Conference (16 May 2025 – attended by 305 judges);
2. virtual conference for judges (6–7 October 2025 – attended by 418 judges).



In his opening remarks, Aigars Strupiņš, Chair of the Judicial Council, pointed out that there are still is wealth of untapped reserves of efficiency and quality within the judicial system, the targeted use of which could make Latvia's courts significantly more efficient, of higher quality and improve the reception of the decisions by the public. The Chair emphasised that the problems lie largely in the organisation of work and skills, and only to a small extent in procedures and legislation. Judges are already equipped with all the legal tools necessary to reduce such appeals to the absolute minimum. It is therefore essential to deepen the knowledge and skills as a matter of priority.

A. Strupiņš urged judges to be prepared to adapt flexibly to changes and solutions aimed at improving the work process. "Investing in case preparation saves bandwidth for both the judge and the parties to the case, as the hearing is focused on the essential matters," said A. Strupiņš. The Chair of the Judicial Council also emphasised the role of strong, objective and professional self-governance. In conclusion, A. Strupiņš announced that a project funded by the European Commission is currently underway, which will provide the Judicial Council with methodological support for planning the effective use of judicial resources. The Judicial Council is also addressing the issue of judicial assistants, which has become a serious problem in the functioning of the judicial system. A major reform of court staff is being prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice.

The first part of the conference was devoted to assessing the challenges to the efficiency of the judicial system. A member of the Judicial Council, Judicial Efficiency Juris Siliņš, head of the working group on strengthening the judiciary and President of the Zemgale Regional Court, provided an update on the current state of the judicial system and the possibilities for optimising its resources. He emphasised that the judiciary is accountable to the public for the rational and effective use of resources. An effective judicial system is characterised by accessibility, timeliness, work that is understandable to the public, and the ability to provide services that meet the needs of the population. In response to a survey conducted during the conference, judges pointed out that the effectiveness of the judiciary is also shaped by the judges' own knowledge, professionalism and integrity.

Professor Jānis Priede, Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences at the University of Latvia, examined the role of the judicial system in the country's economic development at the conference, emphasising that one of the most significant factors in promoting efficiency is the development of new technologies. The judges themselves, however, pointed out that the main challenges associated with the introduction of modern technologies into the judicial system are the system's conservatism, the need to preserve justice and humanity, as well as the necessary knowledge and skills to use these technologies.

In her address, Diana Makarova, Chair of the Judicial Ethics Commission and Senator of the Supreme Court,

focused on how the efficiency of judges' work affects compliance with professional ethics. She also highlighted current issues concerning judges' safety, procedural safeguards and the ethical principles that must be observed when using social media.

The second part of the conference was devoted to ways of enhancing the individual work efficiency of judges, with particular attention paid to new technologies and personal development. Normunds Grūzītis, Head of the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at the Institute of Mathematics and Computer Science, University of Latvia, provided an insight into the opportunities offered by artificial intelligence to support judges' work. The majority of judges indicated that they use artificial intelligence solutions primarily at the everyday user level.

Laila Jurcēna, Director of the Academy of Justice, introduced the work of the Academy of Justice and its role in enhancing the professionalism and work efficiency. She emphasised that the legislature, in cooperation with the judiciary, has established a system that enables a judge appointed for life to deliver objective and fair judgements, whilst fulfilling their official duties and undertaking continuous professional development.

In her address, psychologist Elīna Zelčāne addressed the issue of how judges can maintain their work efficiency whilst avoiding burnout. She encouraged judges to take a step back and look at their daily work routine from the outside, and to carry out a time-management audit to identify the causes of overwork and find ways to improve the balance between their professional and personal needs. The judges acknowledged that one of the greatest challenges in their work is completing all their scheduled tasks within the working day.

At the close of the conference, Aigars Strupiņš emphasised that the Judicial Council would compile the proposals put forward at the conference and continue to seek solutions to improve the efficiency and organisation of the courts' work. Presentations from the Latvian Judges' Conference are available on the Judicial Council's website in the section on the Judges' Conference, under 'Conference Materials'.

In 2025, a virtual Judges' Conference was organised for the election of members of the judges' self-governing bodies.

On 6–7 October 2025, at the remote Judges' Conference:

- Judge Līga Ašitoka, President of the Vidzeme District Court, was elected as a member of the

Judicial Council;

- Inga Kriģena-Jurkāne, a judge at the Riga City Court, was elected as a member of the Judicial Council;
- Inese Laura Zemīte, a Senator of the Supreme Court, was elected as a member of the Judicial Qualifications Committee;
- Irīna Jansone, a Senator of the Supreme Court, was elected as a member of the Judicial Disciplinary Committee;
- Zīta Studente, a judge at the Zemgale District Court, has been elected as a member of the Judicial Disciplinary Committee.

Judges' Qualifications Committee

In accordance with the first paragraph of Article 93 of the Law on Judicial Power, the Judicial Qualifications Committee is a self-governing body of judges responsible for assessing the professional performance of judges.

The Judicial Qualifications Committee operates within the powers set out in the Law on Judicial Power and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Judicial Qualifications Committee, approved by the Judicial Council on 25 February 2022 ('the Committee's Rules of Procedure').

In 2025, the Judicial Qualifications Committee consists of the following members:

- **Silva Reinholde**, Judge of the Kurzeme Regional Court, Chair of the Judicial Qualifications Committee (elected as a member of the Committee on 17 September 2024; elected Chair of the Judicial Qualifications Committee on 24 October 2024);
- **Marianna Terjuhana**, Judge at the Zemgale Regional Court, Deputy Chair of the Judicial Qualifications Committee (elected as Deputy Chair of the Judicial Qualifications Committee on 24 October 2024);
- **Sanita Kanenbergā**, Judge of the Administrative Court of Appeal (elected on 15 September 2022);
- **Ināra Garda**, Senator of the Department of Civil Cases of the Supreme Court (elected on 20 December 2023);
- **Indra Meldere**, Senator of the Department of Administrative Cases of the Supreme Court (elected on 26 September 2024);
- **Ivars Bičkovičs**, Judge of the Department of Criminal Cases of the Supreme Court (elected on 18 April 2023, term of office expired on 30 September 2025);



Silva Reinholde

Chair of the Judicial Qualifications Committee

- **Inese Laura Zemīte**, Senator of the Department of Criminal Cases of the Supreme Court (elected on 7 October 2025);
- **Sanita Strakše**, Judge at Riga City Court (elected on 3 October 2024);
- **Ilze Freimane**, Judge at the Kurzeme District Court (elected on 3 October 2024);
- **Iveta Salaka**, President of the Zemgale District Court (elected on 23 April 2024).

In accordance with Article 93(6) of the Law on Judicial Power, the Court Administration ensures the functioning of the Judicial Qualifications Committee. The Court Administration requests, compiles and forwards to the Judicial Qualifications Committee all necessary assessment materials, and appoints, from among its own staff, a secretary to the Judicial Qualifications Committee, who performs duties related to the organisation of the Committee's work. The Court Administration also provides the Judicial Qualifications Committee with premises for its meetings.

The Judicial Qualifications Committee expresses its gratitude to the Court Administration for its support, and in particular to the Committee's Secretary, Liene Jākobsone, for her diligent work carried out with a high sense of responsibility.

In accordance with the third paragraph of Article 93 of the Law on Judicial Power, the following may participate in meetings of the Judicial Qualifications Committee in an advisory capacity: the Chair of the Legal Affairs Committee of the Saeima, the Minister for Justice, the Prosecutor-General, the President of the Supreme Court or their authorised representatives, a representative delegated by legal experts approved by the Latvian Academy of Sciences, as well as representatives of judges' associations. In 2025, the President of the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor-General and the Latvian Judges' Association exercised this right by delegating their representatives to participate in the meetings of the Judicial Qualifications Committee.

One of the tasks for 2025 was the extraordinary assessment of the professional skills of candidates who had applied for the post of regional court judge in an open competition, in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations of the Judicial Qualifications Committee.

The Judges' Qualifications Committee also continues to compile and analyse the information contained in judges' self-assessment questionnaires regarding training needs, so that, in cooperation with the Judicial Council and the Judicial Academy- to make proposals regarding those training needs which, in the judges' own view, are relevant and necessary for their professional development.

Continuing the cooperation with the Judicial Council that began in 2024, representatives of the Judicial Qualifications Committee took part in visits to courts, which provided an opportunity to discuss matters with colleagues and give them a broader understanding of the work of the Judicial Qualifications Committee.

On 7 October 2025, Marianna Terjuhana, Deputy Chair of the Judicial Qualifications Committee, together with other representatives of judicial self-governing bodies, took part in a seminar entitled 'Strengthening the Rule of Law in Challenging Times: A Dialogue between the Courts of Latvia and Ukraine'. The seminar, which aimed to promote the exchange of professional experience between representatives of the judiciary of both countries and to strengthen judicial independence, took place at the Supreme Court from 6 to 8 October 2025. The Deputy Chair of the Judicial Qualifications Committee spoke at the seminar and presented evaluation of the professional performance of Latvian judges, providing information on the regulatory framework governing the work of the Judicial Qualifications Committee, its composition, functions, types of decisions, avenues for appealing decisions, as well as statistical data illustrating the intensity of the Judicial Qualifications Committee's

activities in 2024–2025, and answered questions from her Ukrainian colleagues.

Given that a change in the composition of the Judicial Qualifications Committee took place in 2024–2025, training sessions were organised for members of the Judicial Qualifications Committee in collaboration with the Academy of Justice and the Court Administration. During these sessions, participants acquired the necessary knowledge and honed their skills in conducting competency-based interviews, in interpreting results and providing feedback, so as to ensure the selection of candidates for posts in higher courts to the highest possible standard.

The aim of the Judicial Qualifications Committee for the coming working year is to continue developing the effectiveness of the assessment of judges' professional performance, in order to ensure the transparency of the process and to facilitate the full professional development of judges, with priorities set on cooperation, process improvement, strengthening internal capacity and analysing work outcomes.

The work of the Judges' Qualifications Committee is focused on professional dialogue and support for colleagues, which means that discussions cover not only positive aspects and achievements, but also mistakes and ways to minimise them, thereby fostering both mutual trust and public confidence in the judiciary.

In 2025, 27 meetings of the Judicial Qualifications Committee were held, during which the Committee assessed the professional conduct of a total of 154 judges: 101 from district (city) courts, 50 from regional courts and 3 from the Supreme Court.



154

Judges received a favourable assessment of their professional conduct



0

Judges' professional conduct was assessed unfavourably



Recommendations for improving professional performance

12 district (city) courts and

3 regional courts



Following recommendations were issued:

- to improve their work organisation and their skills in managing court proceedings;
- to improve their skills in managing court proceedings and decision-making skills;
- to improve their skills in managing court proceedings;
- to improve work organisation skills;
- to improve skills in the reasoning behind decisions;
- to improve decision-making skills;
- to improve skills in managing court proceedings;
- to improve skills in drafting and justifying rulings;
- to improve skills in justifying rulings.

In addition to the assessment of judges' professional conduct, the Judicial Qualifications Committee issued 4 opinions during the aforementioned period regarding the transfer of judges to another court or courthouse and conducted 3 qualification examinations for candidates for the position of Supreme Court judge.

In accordance with Chapter 6 of the Regulations of the Judicial Qualifications Committee, 18 judges underwent an extraordinary assessment in connection with the competition for the post of regional court judge in the Civil and Criminal Divisions, as well as in the Administrative Regional Court.



Judges' Ethics Commission

In accordance with the first paragraph of Article 91¹ of the Law on Judicial Power, the Judicial Ethics Commission is a self-governing body of judges which issues opinions on the interpretation of and breaches of the rules of judicial ethics, and also clarifies the rules of judicial ethics.

The Judicial Ethics Commission comprises the following judges:

- Chair of the Judicial Ethics Commission – **Diāna Makarova**, Senator of the Department of Administrative Cases of the Supreme Court (elected Chair of the Commission on 12 June 2024);
- **Adrija Kasakovska**, judge at the Zemgale District Court (elected on 15 September 2022); Vice-Chair of the Judicial Ethics Commission

Members of the Commission:

- **Uldis Apsītis**, judge at the Riga Regional Court (elected on 16 April 2024);
- **Līga Biksiniece-Martinova**, judge at the Administrative District Court (elected on 16 April 2024);
- **Anda Briede**, President of the Riga City Court (elected on 16 April 2024);
- **Aiva Daidere**, Judge of the Kurzeme Regional Court (elected on 18 April 2023);
- **Jānis Grīnbergs**, judge at the Vidzeme Regional Court (elected on 21 September 2022);
- **Anita Misiuna**, judge at the Zemgale Regional Court (elected on 16 April 2024);
- **Sanita Osipova**, Senator of the Department of Civil Cases of the Supreme Court (elected on 23 April 2024);
- **Gita Zenfa**, Judge at the Zemgale District Court (elected on 16 April 2024).

During the reporting period, 14 meetings of the Judicial Ethics Commission were convened, at which 68 submissions and complaints were examined. Written replies have been provided to all submissions and complaints. During the reporting period, the Judicial Ethics Commission issued one opinion on potential reputational risks for a candidate for the office of judge, one opinion on *ex parte* discussions and one clarification regarding judges as users of social media.



Diāna Makarova
Chair of the Judicial Ethics Commission

The Commission's clarifications and opinions

During the reporting period, the Judicial Ethics Commission prepared:

a clarification on judges as social media users;

opinions:

- on *ex parte* discussions;
- on potential reputational risks for candidates for judicial office.

In cases where opinions were drawn up, the Judicial Ethics Commission found that

- the judge had breached the Code of Ethics. At the same time, the Judicial Ethics Commission concluded that there were no grounds for initiating disciplinary proceedings, as the breach of ethical standards by the judge was not serious;
- the nature of the public statements made by the candidate for the position of judge poses significant reputational risks to him as a judge and to the judicial system as a whole should he be confirmed in the position of judge.

The Commission's anonymised opinions and explanations – currently 89 in total – are available on the courts' website at www.tiesas.lv, as well as on the Judicial Council's website at <https://www.tieslietupadome.lv/lv/tiesnesu-etikas-komisija>. The same site also contains all information relating to the Judicial Ethics Commission – its composition, the Code of Judicial Ethics, the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, the Rules of Procedure of the Judicial Ethics Commission, and contact details – the Commission's

email address and postal address.

Other activities

The Judicial Ethics Commission met with representatives of the Prosecutors' Certification Commission. During the meeting, issues relating to the conduct of judges and prosecutors in situations where a party to proceedings makes threats against a judge or prosecutor were discussed. As a result of the meeting, the Judicial Ethics Commission drew the attention of the Judicial Council to the need to address the issue of judges' safety and the safeguarding of proceedings, whilst balancing the security guarantees provided for judges by law with the efficiency of the courts' work. The Judicial Ethics Commission and the Prosecutors' Certification Commission began cooperating to draw up guidance on compliance with professional ethical standards when judges and prosecutors are confronted with humiliating, offensive or similar behaviour by a party to proceedings.

At the request of the President of the Court, the Judicial Ethics Commission became involved in resolving the disagreements and disputes between the President of the Court and a judge. The Judicial Ethics Commission concluded that it was necessary to engage a professional, competent person – a certified mediator – as the situation that had arisen not only negatively affects the working relationship between the President of the Court and the judge, the working atmosphere within that particular court and the court's operations as a whole, but also impacts the court's image in the eyes of the public. The Judicial Ethics Commission therefore requested the Court Administration to provide the president of the court and the judge with a certified mediator. The Court Administration provided this opportunity, and the president of the court and the judge have made use of the assistance of a

certified mediator.

The Chair of the Judicial Ethics Commission delivered a presentation at the Judges' Conference entitled 'The balance between the efficiency of the judicial system and the professional ethics of judges'. The Chair of the Judicial Ethics Commission participated in a working group set up by the Court Administration. In response to complaints from court staff, the working group conducted an investigation into the conduct of the Chair of the Court Staff Ethics Commission in leading the Commission's work and examining the complaints received.

The Chair of the Judicial Ethics Commission took part in an extended board meeting of the Latvian Judges' Association at the Zemgale District Court in Tukums, where a discussion took place on ethical issues and judges as users of social media.

The Chair of the Judicial Ethics Commission met with students from the journalism and communication programme at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences and discussed issues relating to the media and social media that have come to the Commission's attention.

The Deputy Chair of the Judicial Ethics Commission took part in an experience-sharing event organised by the Judicial Council with a delegation of Ukrainian judges entitled 'Strengthening the Rule of Law in Times of Challenge: A Dialogue on Justice between Latvia and Ukraine', where she presented the work of the Judicial Ethics Commission and discussed the ethical issues addressed in the Commission's opinions and clarifications.

A member of the Judicial Ethics Commission, Senator S. Osipova led a session at the Academy of Justice for judges with up to three years' experience on ethical dilemmas faced by judges.

Disciplinary Panel

The Disciplinary Panel of Judges ('the Disciplinary Panel') is a self-governing body of judges which examines cases concerning disciplinary offences committed by judges of district (city) courts, regional courts and the Supreme Court. Its activities are governed by the Law on the Disciplinary Liability of Judges and the Regulations of the Judicial Disciplinary Committee.

The Law on Disciplinary Liability stipulates that a judge may be held disciplinarily liable for:

- an intentional breach of the law in the hearing of a court case;
- failure to fulfil their duties or gross negligence in the hearing of a case;
- conduct unbecoming of a judge or a gross breach of the Code of Judicial Ethics;
- refusal to resign from membership of political parties or organisations;
- failure to comply with the restrictions and prohibitions laid down in the Law on the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest in the Activities of Public Officials.

Composition of the Judicial Disciplinary Panel:

Valerijs Maksimovs, Chair of the Panel, Senator of the Department of Civil Cases of the Supreme Court (elected on 24 October 2023);

Kaspars Berķis, Deputy Chair of the Panel, Judge of the Administrative Regional Court (elected on 24 October 2023);

Līvija Slica, Senator of the Department of Administrative Cases of the Supreme Court (elected on 24 October 2023);

Aivars Uminskis, Senator of the Department of Criminal Cases of the Supreme Court (elected on 21 September 2021, term of office ended on 20 September 2025);



Valerijs Maksimovs
Chair of the Judicial Disciplinary Committee

Irīna Jansone, Senator of the Department of Criminal Cases of the Supreme Court (elected on 7 October 2025);

Lelde Grauda, Judge of the Civil Division of the Riga Regional Court (elected on 1 November 2023);

Līga Baltmane-Zepa, judge of the Criminal Division of the Riga Regional Court (elected on 26 October 2023);

Kristīne Vanaga, judge at the Zemgale District Court (elected on 1 November 2023);

Zita Studente, judge at the Zemgale District Court (elected on 7 October 2025);

Ilze Andruškina, judge at the Administrative District Court (elected on 24 October 2023).

In 2025, the Disciplinary Panel received five disciplinary cases brought against judges of the courts of first instance and one case brought against a judge of the regional court, of which:

- 3 cases were initiated by the President of the Supreme Court;
- 1 case was initiated by the Minister for Justice;
- 1 case was initiated by the Judicial Ethics Commission;
- 1 case was initiated by the President of the Regional Court.

In 2025, the Disciplinary Panel examined six cases, including:

- 1 case concerning a deliberate breach of the law during the hearing of a court case and a failure to fulfil professional duties;
- 1 case concerning a deliberate breach of the law during the hearing of a court case;
- 2 cases concerning a deliberate breach of the law and/or gross negligence;
- 1 case concerning a deliberate breach of the law during the hearing of a court case and/or gross negligence and a gross breach of ethical standards;
- 1 case concerning a gross breach of ethical standards.

Decisions taken in disciplinary cases in 2025:

- Decisions on disciplinary sanctions – a reprimand – were made in 2 cases;
- 1 case was discontinued as the Judicial Disciplinary Committee found no evidence of an intentional breach of the law and/or gross negligence on the part of the judge in the hearing of the case;
- in 1 case, the Disciplinary Panel confined itself to hearing the case at a sitting, without imposing a disciplinary sanction on the judge;
- In one case, a decision was taken to impose a disciplinary sanction – a reduction in salary for six months, amounting to 20 per cent of the judge's salary;
- In one case, a proposal was made to remove the judge from office.

One decision of the Disciplinary Panel in 2025 was appealed to the Disciplinary Court. In 2025, the Disciplinary Panel also examined submissions and complaints from 40 individuals and institutions.



JUDICIAL COUNCIL COMMISSIONS

Commission for Candidates for District (City) Court and Regional Court Judges

In 2020, the Judicial Council established the Commission for the Selection of Candidates for Judicial Office ('the Selection Commission'), the purpose and main task of which is to select highly qualified lawyers with an impeccable reputation and appropriate professional skills.

Composition of the Commission for the Selection of Candidates for Judicial Office in 2025:

- **Dzintra Balta**, Chair of the Commission for the Selection of Candidates for Judicial Office, Senator of the Department of Civil Cases of the Supreme Court (in office since 27 October 2023);
- **Sandra Kaija**, Senator of the Department of Criminal Cases of the Supreme Court (in office since 27 October 2023);
- **Ieva Višķere**, Senator of the Department of Administrative Cases of the Supreme Court (in office from 27 October 2023);
- **Adrija Buliņa**, Judge of the Civil Division of the Riga Regional Court (in office from 27 October 2023);
- **Andris Vilmanis**, Judge of the Criminal Division of the Latgale Regional Court (in office from 10 March 2023 to 21 December 2025);
- **Aija Āva**, judge at the Kurzeme Regional Court (in office from 22 December 2025);
- **Ilze Freimane**, judge at the Administrative Regional Court (in office from 10 March 2023);



Dzintra Balta

Chair of the Candidate Selection Committee

- **Elita Stivriņa**, Judge at the Latgale District Court (in office from 10 March 2023 to 10 December 2025);
- **Ieva Jankovska**, Judge at the Court of Economic Affairs (in office from 11 December 2025);
- **Madars Plepis**, President of the Kurzeme District Court, judge (in office from 10 March 2023);
- **Kristīne Brokane**, Judge of the Administrative District Court (in office from 10 March 2023).

The aim and main task of the Selection Committee is to ensure an objective, transparent and high-quality process for the selection and appointment of judges. Each stage of the selection process plays a specific role in achieving this objective. The Selection Committee may assess aspects of a candidate's reputation throughout the entire selection process – at any stage thereof.

Experience from previous years shows that in the first round of selection, during which compliance with formal requirements is verified, only a small number of candidates are usually excluded. In the second round, basic professional knowledge is assessed through a test, and it is at this stage that the majority of candidates most often fail to achieve a passing mark. In the subsequent stages of the selection process, there are fewer unsuccessful candidates; however, even at these stages, candidates may not be shortlisted if they fail to demonstrate their professional skills or behavioural competencies in accordance with the criteria for a successful assessment set out in the selection procedure.

The aim of the selection process is to draw up a list of candidates for judicial office who may be appointed when a relevant post becomes vacant. Therefore, all professional lawyers who meet the standard for judicial office are selected from among the applicants. In this case, competition centres on securing a place on the list of

candidates, as the candidate with the highest score is offered the opportunity to fill the specific vacant post first.

Taking into account previous experience in the selection process, the Judicial Council adopted several decisions in 2025 to encourage candidates to apply for the competition for a judicial post in a court of first instance in the area of specialisation in which the candidate is most competent, as well as to ensure the efficiency of the selection committee's work. Specifically, 1) the Judicial Council decided to announce, on 1 September 2025, a competition for the post of district (municipal) court judge specialising in criminal, civil and administrative cases (unlike the previous arrangement, where candidates for courts of general jurisdiction were required to apply for and sit examinations in both civil and criminal specialisations simultaneously), and 2) amendments were made to the selection procedure, providing for the possibility for the selection committee to organise with a panel of three members, which allowed the assessment of professional skills in the third round of the selection process to be carried out simultaneously across competitions for different specialisations.

In January 2025, the selection process continued (third round), and in February, the selection competitions for three judicial posts (the final, fourth round) – which had begun in 2024 – were concluded.

- Seven candidates were put forward for the fourth round of the selection process for district (city) court judges. Following the conclusion of the selection process, five candidates were included on the shortlist; four were appointed to judicial office. One candidate (a judge) on the shortlist is awaiting a suitable vacancy.
- No candidates who are not currently judges were put forward for the fourth round of the selection process for the post of judge on the Civil Division of the Regional Court. Upon completion of the selection process, five candidates – judges of the court of first instance – were included on the list of candidates for the position of judge; in 2025, five judges from the list were transferred to the regional court.
- Three judges from the court of first instance applied for the post of judge on the Criminal Division of the regional court. Upon completion of the selection process, all three judges from the court of first instance were included on the list of candidates for judicial office and transferred to the regional court.

On 1 September 2025, selection procedures were

announced for judicial posts at district (city) courts, the Economic Court, and regional courts across all specialisations, as well as at the Administrative District Court and the Administrative Regional Court.

- A vacancy was announced for courts of general jurisdiction specialising in criminal cases. Twenty-two candidates applied, of whom 19 were shortlisted for the second round of selection, five for the third round, and four for the fourth round. As a result of the selection, two candidates were included on the list of successful candidates.
- A vacancy was announced for courts of general jurisdiction specialising in civil cases. Fifty-eight applicants applied, of whom 48 were shortlisted for the second round, 16 for the third round, and 10 for the fourth round. As a result of the vacancy, nine candidates were included on the list of successful candidates.
- A vacancy was announced at the Economic Court for a position specialising in civil cases. Eight candidates applied, of whom six were shortlisted for the second round of selection, four for the third round, and the fourth round – 1; however, none of the candidates failed the fourth round.
- A vacancy was announced at the Court of Economic Affairs specialising in criminal cases. Seven candidates applied, of whom seven were shortlisted for the second round of selection, four for the third round, and the fourth round. As a result of the competition, one candidate was included on the shortlist for the vacancy.
- A vacancy was announced in the Administrative District. Forty-one candidates applied, of whom, 39 candidates were shortlisted for the second round, 20 for the third round, and 16 for the fourth round. As a result of the competition, 13 candidates were included on the shortlist for the vacancy.
- A vacancy has been announced for the posts of judges at the Administrative Regional Court. Seven candidates applied (five of whom were judges). Of the candidates who were not judges, one was shortlisted for the second round of selection, one for the third round, and the fourth round. As a result of the competition, four candidates were included on the shortlist.

- A vacancy was announced for the posts of judges on the Civil Division of the Regional Court of General Jurisdiction. Seventeen candidates applied (12 of whom were judges). Of the candidates who were not judges, five were shortlisted for the second round of selection, two to the third round, whilst none were shortlisted for the fourth round. The Judicial Qualifications Committee will shortlist judges for the final round of the selection process in 2025–2026.
- A vacancy has been announced for the posts of judges on the Criminal Division of a regional court of general

jurisdiction. Thirteen candidates applied (seven of whom were judges). Of the candidates who are not judges, 5 have been shortlisted for the second round of selection, 2 for the third round, and 1 for the fourth round. As a result of the selection, 7 candidates have been included on the list of successful candidates.

- The Judicial Qualifications Committee began referring candidates for the post of regional court judge who are currently district (city) court judges to the final round of the selection process in 2025 and will continue to do so in 2026.



Commission for the Selection of Candidates for the Posts of President, Vice-President of Court and Courthouse

In 2025, the Commission for the Assessment of Candidates for the Posts of President, Deputy President and Courthouse President of District (City) Courts and Regional Courts ('the Commission') continued- three permanent members: two members delegated by the Judicial Council from among the judges – Ilze Celmiņa and Guntars Ploriņš – as well as a representative authorised by the Minister of Justice – Inita Ilgaža, Deputy State Secretary at the Ministry of Justice. The fourth member of the Commission in each of the competitions was a representative of the judiciary, and in this way, seven judges from the relevant courts served on the Commission last year.

In 2025, a total of 10 competitions were announced for vacant posts of court presidents, deputy presidents and court house presidents:

- President of the Rēzekne Courthouse of the Administrative District Court;
- President of the Valmiera Courthouse of the Administrative District Court;
- Deputy President of the Administrative Regional Court;
- Deputy President of the Riga City Court;
- President of the Latgale Regional Court;
- Deputy President of the Riga Regional Court (2 posts);
- President of the Vidzeme Regional Court;
- Deputy President of the Vidzeme District Court (2 posts).



Guntars Ploriņš

Chair of the Judicial Appointments Committee

In 2025, the trend observed in previous years continued, with between one and two candidates applying for vacant positions in the judiciary. However, the predominant number of candidates was exactly one, and this was the case in 8 out of 10 announced vacancies. In total, 12 candidates applied for these 10 vacancies, and the Commission interviewed and assessed them.

Basis for the Commission's activities: Procedure for the nomination and appointment of the President, Vice-President and Court House President of District (City) Courts and Regional Courts (Decision No. 6 of the Judicial Council of 15 March 2019).

Court Reports

Supreme Court

President of the Supreme Court
Aigars Strupišs

2025 was an election year for the Supreme Court – in June, Aigars Strupišs' term of office as President of the Supreme Court came to an end. The Plenary Session re-nominated him, and the Saeima confirmed him as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for a second term.

Elections were held for the position of the head of two departments of the Supreme Court. Normunds Salenieks continues to head the Department of Civil Cases, whilst the Department of Criminal Cases has a new head – Aivars Uminkis. The Plenary Session also elected two members of the Disciplinary Court – Anita Poļakova was re-elected and Inese Grauda was newly elected. The Plenary Session's agenda for 2025 also included an unusual item – assessing whether there were grounds to dismiss the Prosecutor-General from office.

What issues have generally been on the plenary's agenda over the 35 years since the restoration of the Supreme Court of the independent Republic of Latvia, was summarised in a recently published book 'The Plenary Session of the Supreme Court 1990–2025'.

Changes to the composition of the Senate

In 2025, the Supreme Court had 35 senators and 111 members of the staff. The composition of the Senate changed in two departments. Senator Gvido Ungurs took up his post in the Civil Cases Department, whilst Senator Ļubova Kušnīre retired. Senators Māris Leja and Jānis Rozenbergs took up their posts in the Criminal Cases Department. Ivars Bičkovičs retired.

Statistics

In 2025, the Senate received 1,862 cases, which is 7 per cent fewer than in 2024. A total of 1,817 cases were heard – 9 per cent fewer than in the previous year.

On average, a senator examined 58 cases in the Department of Administrative Cases, 53 in the Department of Civil Cases and 51 in the Department of Criminal Cases. This caseload is considered optimal for a court of cassation.

The time taken to hear cases has decreased in the Department of Civil Cases (4.3 months) and the Department of Administrative Cases (9 months). In the Department of Criminal Cases, it has increased slightly (4.7 months).

In the Department of Civil Cases, the percentage of applications for cassation proceedings that are refused has remained stable for several years; in 2025, it stood at 85 per cent. In the Criminal Division, the number of refusals has stabilised within the range of 73–75 per cent. In the Administrative Cases Department, too, the rejection rate has risen to 65 per cent. This indicates both stable case law and an improvement in the quality of regional court judgments.

However, a more significant indicator is the proportion of cases referred to the Senate and judgments set aside. In the Civil Cases Department, six years ago 28 per cent of the cases heard were upheld, whereas last year the figure was 7 per cent. In the Criminal Division, this figure has fallen from 45% to 18%. The Department of Administrative Cases has the highest percentage – 32% – but this too represents a significant reduction. Occasionally, cases are brought with a view to establishing case law.

Case law

In 2025, 319 Senate rulings were added to the case law archive, representing 18 per cent of the total number of cases heard. Along with the legal principles, 65 decisions from the Department of Civil Cases, 60 from the Criminal Division and 126 from the Department of Administrative Cases were added.

There was a change in case law in three cases. The plenary session of the Criminal Division adopted a decision on the application of Article 260 of the Criminal Law. Four compilations of the Senate's case law have been published: in civil cases – on insurance matters; in criminal cases – on breaches of road traffic regulations and vehicle operation regulations, human trafficking, and on the jurisdiction of the court of appeal to order a retrial of a criminal case in the court of first instance.

In 2025, the Senate referred two requests for preliminary rulings to the Court of Justice of the European Union – in the fields of competition law and tax law. The Court of Justice of the European Union has delivered two judgments in response to the Senate's requests for preliminary rulings in the fields of tax law and consumer protection. The Senate has lodged three applications with the Constitutional Court.



90 years ago – on 4 December 1936 – the foundation stone was laid for the Palace of Justice in Riga. Built in two years, the Palace of Justice still stands tall, and it remains the home of the highest court – formerly the Latvian Senate, now the Supreme Court or the Senate. Senators, staff and their children at the Supreme Court were invited to draw our workplace – the Palace of Justice. This drawing by Iveta Jaudzema, a specialist in the Communications Department, received the most votes in a staff poll and was featured on the cover of the Supreme Court's calendar

International cooperation

The Supreme Court represents Latvia in the Network of Presidents of the Supreme Courts of the European Union and in the Association of the Councils of State and Supreme Administrative Courts of the European Union. As part of the Judges' Exchange Programme of the Network of Presidents of the Supreme Courts, Senator Aldis Laviņš had a chance to complete an exchange at the Supreme Court of the Netherlands. Representatives of the Department of Administrative Cases took part in an exchange of experience at the German Federal Social Court. Several senators have visited the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Scientific and analytical advisers undertook a study visit to the Italian Supreme Court and the Council of State, whilst

staff members took part in a meeting of staff from the Supreme Courts of the Baltic States in Vilnius. I. Bērtaite-Pudāne, an adviser in the Department of Administrative Cases, has been seconded as a national expert since 1 June 2025 and is gaining experience at the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The Supreme Court, in cooperation with the European Court of Human Rights, organised an international conference entitled 'The Right to a Fair Trial: The European Convention on Human Rights in the Dialogue between National Courts and the European Court of Human Rights', and also contributed to the Judicial Council's international activities – the organisation of the General Assembly of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary and the meeting 'Strengthening the Rule of Law in Challenging Times: A Dialogue between the Courts of Latvia and Ukraine'.

A visit by a delegation from the Supreme Court of the Czech Republic to Latvia was organised. A further 12 groups of foreign guests were received.

Engagement with the public

The Supreme Court's communication is open and proactive. The 'Supreme Court Bulletin' is published. A total of 303 press releases were issued, and the X account was actively maintained. Two press conferences were held. Open Days were organised for students of both law and communication. A total of 1,049 school pupils took part in law lectures at the Supreme Court.

During Museum Night, the Supreme Court welcomed approximately 900 visitors, and the exhibition 'European Judges' Robes' was viewed by more than 1,000 visitors.

Priorities for 2026

The Supreme Court's operational strategy for 2026–2029 has been approved. The main areas of focus are: 1) promoting consistent and stable case law; 2) ensuring an effective and fair cassation process; 3) streamlining internal processes and resources, 4) strengthening cooperation, dialogue and public trust. The annual plan sets out the operational priorities accordingly.

One of the tasks for 2026 is to analyse compliance with the guidelines for drafting judgments, both in the Senate and in the lower courts. An analysis will also be carried out of compliance with the guidelines for drafting cassation appeals drawn up by the Supreme Court.

The second area of focus is the implementation of the artificial intelligence tool developed by the Supreme Court.

► **Justice**

► **Independence**

► **Professionalism**

► **Society and the individual**

...these values of the Supreme Court form the basis of our new operational strategy and which we reinforce in our daily work.



Administrative Regional Court

President of the Administrative Regional Court
Ojārs Priedītis

The past year, 2025, was generally characterised by stability in the work of the Administrative Regional Court. As in 2024, the court's efforts in 2025 succeeded in reducing the backlog of pending cases by 5 per cent. At the same time, this means that the court is able to hear more administrative cases than are received over the course of a calendar year. Whilst previous years saw a downward trend in the number of cases received, 2025 saw a slight increase of approximately 2 per cent in the number of cases received. Overall, the Administrative Court's performance indicators show a positive trend, but it remains necessary to continue striving to improve the efficiency of the court's operations, paying particular attention to the management of case processing times.

In 2025, cases relating to the Latvian local government elections that took place should be highlighted as a specific category of cases heard, for the assessment of the results of which the legislature has established a specific procedure. Specifically, in accordance with the first and second paragraphs of Article 52 of the Local Council Elections Law, the Administrative Regional Court, as the court of first instance, examines applications concerning decisions taken by the Central Election Commission in the cases specified by law. In connection with the 2025 local elections, the Administrative Regional Court received a total of 11 applications – from seven local election candidates, two political parties and one legal person governed by private law (an association). In six cases, the court delivered judgments dismissing the applications. In one case, the court examined a complaint regarding the failure to extend a procedural time limit and dismissed it. In three cases, the applications were deemed not to have been lodged, as the applicants had not remedied the identified deficiencies. In one case, the application was refused.



Photograph from the archives of the Administrative Regional Court

Another notable aspect of the court's work is that, during 2025, 11 cases were heard relating to decisions by the Prosecutor-General concerning the refusal, revocation or downgrading of special permits, as well as decisions by the Minister for the Interior regarding the inclusion of individuals on a list of those prohibited from entering the Republic of Latvia. A case was also examined concerning the imposition of an obligation on the Cabinet of Ministers to issue a permit for the acquisition of a significant shareholding in a commercial company of importance to national security.

The legal relationships assessed in the cases heard by the Administrative Regional Court are closely linked to the development of society and international processes, and they require the ongoing interpretation of legal provisions. In this context, the court's dialogue with the Constitutional Court and the Court of Justice of the European Union is of particular importance. Last year, the regional court submitted two applications to the Constitutional Court, and in both cases constitutional proceedings were initiated. Similarly, in one case, a decision was taken to refer questions to the Court of Justice of the European Union for a preliminary ruling on the interpretation of European Union law.

As part of this preliminary ruling procedure, the examination of 17 tax cases had already been suspended, and the impact of this on overall case processing times continued into 2025. However, in July 2025, the Court of Justice of the European Union delivered a judgment which allowed the suspended cases to be resumed and provided significant guidance on the interpretation of the relevant legal provisions.

The year 2025 was also significant for the Administrative Regional Court in the context of international cooperation. During the year, the court hosted several foreign delegations, promoting the exchange of experience and mutual understanding of the work of administrative courts. In May 2025, the Regional Court hosted colleagues from the Seventh Administrative Court of Appeal of Ukraine, whilst on 6 October, representatives of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development visited the court. Similarly, on 13 October, colleagues from the Slovenian Administrative Court visited the Regional Court, where they were introduced to the court's structure, jurisdiction and place within the Latvian court system.

In 2025, as in the previous year, changes continued to take place within the judiciary. A long-serving and highly regarded colleague, Judge Māris Birzgalis, retired. At the same time, two new colleagues – Judges Līga Hāzenfuse and Marita Miķelsone – began their careers at the Administrative Regional Court; their arrival contributed to the efficiency of case handling and had a positive impact on overall processing times. Changes also took place at the level of the court's management. By a decision of the Judicial Council on 9 May 2025, Judge Sandra Gintere was appointed Deputy President of the Administrative Regional Court. Prior to her appointment, Judge Sanita Kanenberga had been acting in this capacity. These personnel changes also mark a broader process of generational change within the court, which will become one of the most significant challenges in the coming years.

Last year also saw the continued digitisation of the court's work processes. An increasing number of cases were received by the Administrative Regional Court in electronic form, which is gradually changing the organisation of case management and hearing procedures. In this context, the Judicial Council's support for the carefully considered introduction of electronic administrative case management is crucial.

In 2026, the Administrative Regional Court aims to continue improving the quality and efficiency of proceedings, with a particular focus on reducing the time taken to hear cases. In cooperation with the Academy of Justice, significant emphasis will be placed on the professional development and training of judges and staff, as well as on the integration of digital solutions into day-to-day work.



Riga Regional Court

President of the Riga Regional Court
Māris Vigants

The Riga Regional Court's working year was filled with a wide range of activities relating to infrastructure improvements, strategic planning and participation in continuing professional development projects within the judicial system.

The Regional Court marked the 30th anniversary of the resumption of its operations with a formal working meeting on, and this can undoubtedly be regarded as a significant event not only in the history of the Riga Regional Court but also in that of the Latvian judicial system.

In implementing the guidelines of the regional court's development concept drawn up by the President of the Regional Court, preparatory work took place in 2025 for the transition to working in two Civil Division panels, with a view to their establishment and commencement of operations in 2026. By a decision of the Judicial Council dated 24 October 2025,

Judge Agnese Veita was appointed Deputy President of the Court of Appeal and Chair of the Civil Division.

To promote consistent judicial practice, the judges of the Civil Division held working meetings with judges from the first-instance courts of the Riga Judicial District to provide an overview of rulings handed down at the appeal stage and to discuss current issues.

During their working meetings, the judges of the Riga Regional Court met with representatives of the Judicial Council, the Judicial Qualifications Panel and the Judicial Selection Committee; they reviewed the performance indicators of the courts, discussed the work of the judicial self-government and current issues relating to the functioning and development of the judicial system. The management and representatives of the Riga Regional Court participated in the work of the Judicial Council, deciding on the optimal number of judges and the reallocation of resources (for example, the transfer of posts between courts to reduce workloads).



Photographs from the Riga Regional Court archive

Whilst carrying out their official duties, the judges of the regional court continued to participate actively in various working groups tasked with drafting amendments to legislation – in the work of the Judicial Selection Committee and the Court Administration's working group on refining the model for determining the complexity of cases in courts of appeal.

The Criminal Division operated under conditions of increased workload; nevertheless, the continuity and quality of criminal proceedings were ensured. In 2025, two judges – Līga Baltmane-Zepa and Erlens Ernstsons – joined the Criminal Division, thereby strengthening the division's capacity.

The Criminal Division was actively involved in the sixth round of the *Moneyval* evaluation process in accordance with the requirements of the new *FATF* methodology. The court played a key role in selecting appropriate cases, evaluating case law and facilitating inter-institutional cooperation, thereby demonstrating the Latvian judicial system's ability to ensure the effective functioning of the anti-money laundering system. The active phase of the assessment concluded in the summer of 2025, and the final report is currently being prepared.

The scope of the work of the Criminal Division changed significantly following the Constitutional Court's judgment in Case No. 2022-32-01, which found that the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Law concerning the proof of the origin of criminally obtained property were in conformity with the Constitution. The division's capacity was optimised by the Judicial Council's decision to exclude the Riga Regional Court from the allocation of administrative offence cases from 1 March 2025 to 31 December 2025. This allowed resources to be concentrated on the examination of criminal proceedings and improved the organisation of work. A particularly complex situation persisted specifically in proceedings concerning criminally obtained property – the procedural time limits laid down by law, the number of judges and the caseload highlight the need to further improve the planning of judicial resources and the organisation of work in future periods as well, in order to ensure the sustainability and quality of proceedings.

The Academy of Justice plays a significant role in the day-to-day work of judges and court staff, with judges and staff involved both as teaching staff. Judges took part in the fifth Summer School organised by Riga Graduate School of Law. The Riga Regional Court was also represented at the annual regional seminar for judges and judicial system staff organised by the Patent Board. In collaboration with

the Judicial Council, a new tradition was launched – Judges' Assistants' Day, which took place in January 2026 and will be held annually.

In the summer of 2025, renovation work was carried out on the main entrance and security post of the regional court building at 34 Brīvības Boulevard. The historic regional court chamber has also been refurbished with modern equipment, and a consultation room has been created to support the work of the Civil Division.

In collaboration with the Court Administration, a room for the children of court staff has been fitted out in the court building at 34 Brīvības Boulevard, which improves the court's operations, fosters a positive image of the court and enhances staff well-being.

In 2025, the Riga Regional Court once again organised a 'Shadow Day' and introduced young people to the work of the court. The Riga Regional Court remains open to students who require work placements as part of their studies. Last year, students from three Latvian higher education institutions were accepted for work placements. A notable tradition was the semi-final of the Pauls Mincks criminal law moot court competition, which took place at the Riga Regional Court in October 2025.

The Riga Regional Court took part in the Ministry of Justice's sports games, and at the end of 2025 a Winter Festival charity auction was held, with the proceeds donated to an animal shelter for the second year running.

In 2025, the Riga Regional Court took part in international cooperation projects and hosted representatives of the judicial systems from Armenia and Germany, introducing them to Latvia's digital solutions in the courts and the justice system – e-case management, anonymisation and transcription tools. Participants in a study visit from the National Judicial School of Greece were given an insight into the hearing of cases at the court of appeal. Meanwhile, discussions were held with colleagues from the High Council of Justice of Ukraine and the Kyiv Court of Appeal on the organisation of case allocation and the balancing of court workloads, and they were briefed on Ukraine's experience in ensuring the functioning of the courts in wartime conditions.

Kurzeme Regional Court

President of the Kurzeme District Court

Didzis Aktumanis

The year 2025 marked the 30th anniversary of the re-establishment of the Kurzeme Regional Court, during which we reflected on our past achievements and looked ahead to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Following the dynamic changes in staffing over recent years, not a single judge or member of staff left the court in 2025. Four new staff members have joined the court's team: court clerks Ilze Meire and Inta Stumbre, court session clerk Viktorija Vītola, and judicial assistant Līga Kirstuka. On 22 September 2025, Judge Jānis Bumbieris was transferred to the Kurzeme Regional Court. Consequently, all 13 judicial posts at the court are currently filled, thereby ensuring the court's full and effective operation.

Compared with 2024, there has been an increase in the number of cases received and heard by the Kurzeme Regional Court, particularly in relation to administrative

offence cases. The number of criminal cases received has increased by 18 per cent, whilst the number of cases heard has risen by 8 per cent. The number of enforcement cases received has increased by 90 per cent, whilst the number of cases heard has risen by 80 per cent. The number of administrative offence cases received has increased by 125 per cent, whilst the number of cases examined has risen by 154 per cent. The number of civil cases received has increased by 31 per cent, whilst the number of cases heard has risen by 11 per cent. The number of ancillary complaints received in civil cases has increased by 28 per cent, whilst the number of cases heard has risen by 38 per cent.

In 2025, the Kurzeme Regional Court participated in fostering dialogue within the judiciary, sharing experience and discussing current issues in judicial practice with both first-instance judges and representatives of the Senate. On 21 March 2025, the annual seminar with the Kurzeme District Court took place, which was also attended by representatives of the Senate's Criminal Cases Department. During the seminar, current legal issues in the fields of criminal law, administrative offences and civil law were discussed, and an overview was provided of



Photographs from the archives of the Riga Regional Court

an overview of the summaries prepared by the Regional Court, which analyse decisions of the court of first instance that have been appealed.

On 19 June 2025, representatives of the Academy of Justice visited the court and provided information on the Academy's latest developments, current affairs and future plans.

In 2025, judges and staff of the Kurzeme Regional Court continued to actively participate in various initiatives aimed at improving the judicial system, such as the working group on refining the model for determining the complexity of cases in appeal courts, the working group on the introduction of e-cases and case management, the standing working groups on the Civil Procedure Law, the Criminal Procedure Law and the Criminal Law, as well as fulfilling the duties of members of various self-governing bodies. Judge Aiva Daidere serves as a member of the Judicial Ethics Commission and, in 2025, visited the European Court of Human Rights, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament during a study visit to Strasbourg. Judicial assistant Nelda Ose serves on the Judicial Staff Ethics Commission (elected as Chair of the Commission in 2025), whilst Judge Silva Reinholde continues to fulfil her duties as Chair of the Judicial Qualifications Committee; whilst Judge Aija Āva was appointed in 2025 to the Selection Committee for Candidates for the Posts of District (City) and Regional Court Judges. Judge Judīte Mauliņa, as a representative of the court, regularly participates in conferences, seminars, studies and surveys organised by the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), and also serves on the board of the Latvian Judges' Association.

It is a source of pride to note that in 2025, judges and court staff received a total of 10 awards from the judicial system, the Ministry of Justice and the Court Administration in recognition of their contribution to the development of the judicial system and the professional fulfilment of their duties. The First Class Medal of Honour of the Judicial System was awarded to Judge Silva Reinholde, whilst Judge Linda Vēbere received the Second Class Medal of Honour of the Judicial System. Judge Didzis Aktumanis received the Ministry of Justice's First Class Certificate of Recognition and a 'gold' quill, whilst Judge Sandra Mertena and judicial assistant Nelda Ose were awarded

with the Ministry of Justice's Second Class Certificate of Recognition and a 'silver' quill. The President of the Court's assistant, Baiba Andersone, received the Court Administration's Certificate of Honour; court clerk Elīna Ansule was awarded the Court Administration's Certificate of Appreciation, whilst court clerks Lizete Marta Češke and Zaiga Būmeistare, and Deputy Head of the Registry Ilze Vitrupa were awarded a Notation of Commendation from the Court Administration.

Continuing a long-standing tradition, at the end of each year the court's best employees are selected and honoured through an internal vote. In 2025, Madara Ēvaldi was recognised by her colleagues as the best judicial assistant, Evita Mazo as the best court clerk, and Mārtiņš Bendorfs, the court driver, as the best registry staff member.

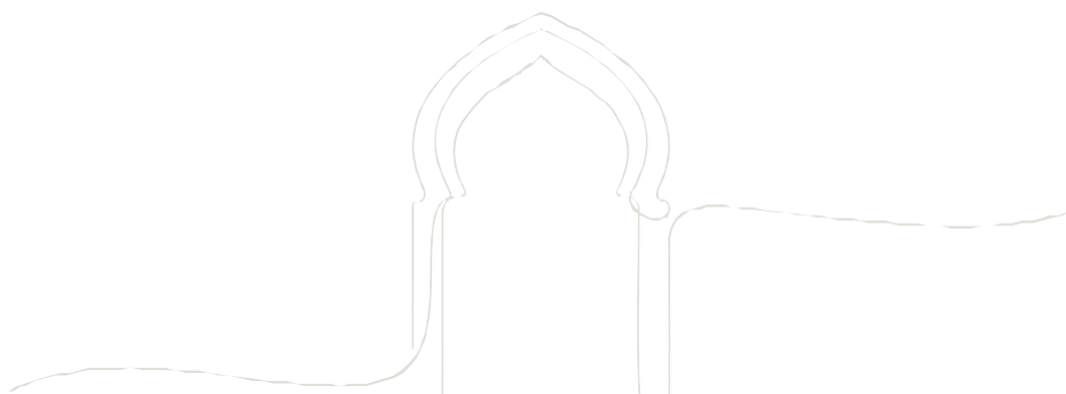
To foster team spirit within the court, joint internal events were held for judges and staff – including the annual festive tradition of decorating the premises in the spirit of the summer solstice, as well as sporting and educational activities (a hike, brain-teaser games at Easter and Christmas, an excursion to the new Liepāja Prison, and participation in sports games organised by the Kurzeme District Court).

To bring joy to the children at the Liepāja Children's Support Centre 'Dzintari' at Christmas, a fundraising campaign was organised at the end of 2025, raising 1 050 euros. Taking into account the children's needs and wishes, the funds raised were used to purchase and present the children with various household items, toiletries, clothing, board games, sports equipment and gift vouchers for various entertainment and catering venues.

For more than 10 years, the Kurzeme Regional Court has developed a good working relationship and friendship with colleagues at the Šiauliai Regional Court in Lithuania, within the framework of which joint conferences and meetings are organised every year. Unfortunately, in 2025, as in 2024, such a joint meeting did not take place for various objective reasons. Cooperation will continue in 2026 – we have already received an invitation to a meeting with our colleagues at the Šiauliai Regional Court, where we plan to discuss topical issues such as artificial intelligence in the work of the courts and judicial ethics.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the ceremonial event dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the re-establishment of the Kurzeme Regional Court, entitled 'From Art Nouveau to Artificial Intelligence: A 30-Year Journey Through Time', which took place on 31 October 2025 and was attended by court staff and judges, the first President of the re-established regional court, Astrīda Herta Bērziņa, former judges, former court staff who have become judges, as well as invited guests: the Minister for Justice, Inese Lībiņa-Egnere, and representatives from the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, the Court Administration and the Kurzeme District Court. In the first part of the event, Dace Kārkla, Director of the Liepāja Museum, introduced the attendees to the history of the Kurzemes Regional Court's premises – an outstanding Art Nouveau building – whilst Dzintra Balta, in her presentation emphasised the crucial role of human and natural intelligence in ensuring justice, whilst Edvīns Balševics, State Secretary at the Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development, outlined trends in the development of artificial intelligence and its potential applications within the judicial system. In the second part of the event, thanks to the efforts of court archivist Dagnija Šmite and the team involved, a long-cherished dream was realised and the Kurzeme Regional Court Museum was opened, for which the Court Administration also expressed its gratitude for the contribution to the preservation of Latvia's judicial history and cultural heritage. On the occasion of the court's anniversary, it is particularly worth noting that two members of staff have been working at the court since its very first day of reopening – judicial assistant Nelda Ose and driver Mārtiņš Bendorfs.

In 2025, through joint efforts and mutual support, the court's staff have successfully overcome all difficulties and challenges, steadfastly moving towards progress; for this, thanks are due to each and every one of them, for without the contribution of every single person, neither the grand nor the modest goals can be achieved. Let us continue to preserve the court's unique identity, remembering that it is difficulties that strengthen us, but it is our vision that drives us towards our future goals.



Latgale Regional Court

President of the Latgale Regional Court

Alla Šilova

The Latgale Regional Court is located in Rēzekne and has 13 approved judicial posts. Seven judges served on the Civil Division and six on the Criminal Division. In 2025, Silvija Vasiļevska, a judge of the Civil Division, and Juris Vasiļkovskis, a judge of the Criminal Division, retired, whilst two new judges took up their posts – Gunārs Strucinskis, transferring from the Latgale District Court, and Judge Sanita Rūtena-Laizāne, who joined from the Riga Regional Court.

The Court's objectives and challenges for 2025 have been met, with the administration of justice being carried out consistently and responsibly. Throughout the year, the court carried out targeted work to ensure that every party to a case had their rights respected and access to a fair trial.

Our working conditions and environment, together with other significant factors, enable us to carry out our duties to a high standard and to provide judicial services in the Latgale region, ensuring access to justice. I would particularly like to note that in 2025, one of the courtrooms was renovated and fitted with modern furniture and state-of-the-art technology.

The Latgale Regional Court has succeeded in forecasting case hearing times for 2025, which are very close to the actual figures and demonstrate the predictability of the duration of legal proceedings. As a result, every client of the court was able to plan the time required for the hearing of their case.

In 2025, the Latgale Regional Court received 167 civil cases, 300 criminal cases, 28 enforcement of sentences cases and 153 administrative offence cases.

It heard 208 civil cases, 292 criminal cases, 31 enforcement of sentences cases and 134 administrative offence cases.



Photograph from the archives of the Administrative Regional Court

The average case processing time for all cases received by the court in 2025 was 4.1 months; for civil cases – 4.7 months; and 4.7 months for criminal cases, which is better than the forecast and approved standard for case processing times for 2025.

One of the most significant tasks last year was to ensure the swifter hearing of criminal cases, including those received from other courts. I believe we have succeeded in this task, as the number of criminal cases completed per judge following allocation is high.

From 2025, regional courts began hearing administrative offence cases ('AOCs') referred to them under the principle of centralised allocation.

Centralised allocation was introduced by amendments to the Administrative Liability Law, which came into force on 1 January 2025, and it ensures a uniform, objective and balanced allocation of APK appeal cases across all regional courts.

The number of completed Administrative Offences Code appeal cases assigned to a judge at the Latgale Regional Court following allocation is relatively high. The centralised allocation of cases ensured an equal and objective caseload for judges, as well as improving the transparency of the process.

Improving the litigation process, drafting high-quality and legally sound judgments, and presenting them in a clear and comprehensible manner were the court's priorities. The Latgale Regional Court continued to strengthen the transparency of the court's work and public trust by ensuring that court decisions and the proceedings as a whole are understandable, accessible and traceable to everyone.

In 2025, the Latgale Regional Court participated in and facilitated internal dialogue within the judiciary, sharing experiences and discussing current issues in the work of the courts with first-instance judges, prosecutors and representatives of the Supreme Court.

Judges and staff actively participate in various initiatives to improve the judicial system – in the working group on the introduction of e-cases, in the standing working groups on Civil Procedure, Criminal Procedure and the Criminal Law, and also served on the Judicial Selection Commission. The staff of the Latgale Regional Court also took part in the 23rd Ministry of Justice Sports Games on 2 August 2025 and came third in the overall team standings.

Judges and staff highly appreciated the launch of the Academy of Justice and the training programmes it offers, which take a comprehensive approach to the development of professional competences. The involvement of the Academy's staff and their concern for the interests and wishes of every judge and court employee are highly appreciated.

As part of Career Days, the Latgale Regional Court collaborates with educational institutions and provides an insight into the work of the court and the day-to-day life of a judge.

In 2025, the staff of the Latgale Regional Court continued the established tradition of celebrating holidays together. A professional and cohesive team is the key to the court's stability and development. To foster team spirit and motivation among judges and staff, we strive to get to know one another better through team-building events designed to strengthen communication and growth within the team.

Changes to the composition of the judiciary have been a significant factor in the organisation of the court's work, as changes to the composition of judges and staff at the Latgale Regional Court have been a rare occurrence to date. Today, the court views the future with concern, as the number of judges at the Latgale Regional Court is set to fall by 61 per cent in 2026. A further five judges have announced their intention to retire.

A persistent problem in the Latgale region is the difficulty in filling vacant judicial posts in the court of first instance. This is due to several factors:

- there is a low intake of new candidates in the region,
- a significant proportion of judges are approaching retirement age,
- the number of vacancies in the courts of first instance is the highest in the country, which also has a significant impact on the functioning of the regional courts.

A reduced number of judges, combined with a consistently high caseload, will inevitably prolong the time taken to hear cases, increase the risks of professional overload and burnout amongst judges, and contribute to staff turnover. Taken together, these factors may jeopardise the court's ability to ensure effective, high-quality and timely administration of justice, and may also pose risks to the guarantee of the right to a fair trial enshrined in the Constitution.

Looking to the future, I am confident that, even in challenging circumstances, we will be able to maintain professional excellence. Let us continue to work on improving the efficiency of the courts' work, ensuring the right to a fair trial, strengthening uniform practice and developing human resources.

I would like to thank every colleague for their hard work, professionalism and sense of responsibility. Our common goal is to ensure a high-quality, understandable and publicly accessible judiciary. I believe that through teamwork, mutual respect and professional support, we will continue to develop a modern, strong and trustworthy judicial system.

Vidzeme Regional Court

President of the Vidzeme Regional Court

Elfa Driba

The year 2025 was an anniversary year for the Vidzeme Regional Court, just as it was for the Riga, Zemgale, Kurzeme and Latgale Regional Courts. 31 March marked 30 years since the resumption of the regional courts' operations in 1995. The court's staff, together with invited guests, looked back on the years of work during a ceremonial event, honouring the court's institutional continuity and its contribution to the development of Latvia's judicial system, particularly highlighting the significant contribution of the court's first President, Edīte Knēgere, to the establishment of the court and its staff, as well as the achievements of the current President, Modris Lapiņš. We were delighted to meet former colleagues,

who, with their reminiscences, enriched the court's history and photographs, which have been compiled in digital format. We are proud that Tija Skrapste, the President's assistant, and the judges' assistants Viktorija Aizpuriete, Larisa Leiduma and Māra Sīle – all of whom have been with the court since its re-establishment – are still working here, continuing to share their wealth of professional experience on a daily basis.

At the Vidzeme Regional Court, the generational change among judges that began last year continued. In the middle of summer, the President of the Court, Modris Lapiņš, and Judge Sandra Bakmane took a well-deserved break; in the autumn, as the national holidays approached, Judges Ginta Gita Kukaine and Zaiga Cera retired, their work having been recognised with high honours by the Ministry of Justice. At joint events, we expressed our heartfelt thanks to our colleagues for their many years of conscientious service, for strengthening the rule of law and for enhancing the prestige of the regional court.



Photograph from the archives of the Vidzeme Regional Court

The retirement of four judges undoubtedly had an objective impact on the performance indicators of the Vidzeme Regional Court compared with previous years, particularly given that the total number of cases received by the Vidzeme Regional Court increased by 10.7 per cent in 2025. However, an analysis of the statistical data shows that, even under these circumstances, the majority of cases were heard within the time limits set out in the case-handling standards. During the reporting period, the number of civil cases received by the court decreased, whilst the number of criminal cases and cases concerning administrative offences received by the court increased significantly; this can be explained by the transfer of criminal cases for hearing from the Riga Regional Court, as well as legislative changes regarding the allocation of administrative offence cases and decisions by the Judicial Council to exclude the Riga Regional Court from the allocation of administrative offence cases for a specified period. In order to balance the workload between the panels and ensure that cases are heard within reasonable timeframes, judges from the Civil Division were increasingly involved in the work of the Criminal Division, and for a specific period they were also included in the allocation of administrative offence cases. Inter-panel court panels were formed. Online hearings of civil cases were launched in collaboration with colleagues from the Madona Courthouse. In this regard, the initiative of Judge Jānis Grīnbergs is worthy of praise; by a decision of the Judicial Council dated 14 March 2025, he was appointed Deputy President of the Vidzeme Regional Court and Chair of the Civil Division.

The retirement of the President of the Court, Modra Lapiņa, led to changes in the court's leadership. Following a competition, Elfa Driba was appointed President of the Vidzeme Regional Court by a decision of the Judicial Council on 24 October 2025. Meanwhile, by a decision of the Judicial Council on 6 November 2025, Judge Alvis Melbergs was appointed Deputy President of the Vidzeme Regional Court and Acting Chair of the Criminal Division.

In 2025, Judge Inese Tumanova successfully continued her work on the Unified Professional Qualification Examination Commission for Lawyers, whilst Judge Jānis Grīnbergs continued his work on the Judicial Ethics Commission and on the Board of the Latvian Judges' Association.

On 19 November 2025, we warmly welcomed Judge Lauris Šņepsts from the Vidzeme District Court to our court, who will henceforth serve on the Criminal Division. Although four judicial posts remain vacant at the Vidzeme Regional Court following the appointment of our new colleague, we ended 2025 on a hopeful note, as three judges from the Vidzeme District Court have applied for the selection competition for posts at the regional court. We are following their progress in the competition with particular attention, hoping for a positive assessment of their professional skills and competences.

At the start of the year, the Minister for Justice, Inese Lībiņa-Egnere, visited the Vidzeme Regional Court, accompanied by representatives from the Ministry, to meet with the court staff and discuss current issues in the justice sector. In May, Laila Jurcēna, Director of the Academy of Justice, visited the court and outlined her vision for how to organise the training of judges and staff more effectively. The Vidzeme Regional Court has participated in fostering internal dialogue within the judiciary, sharing experiences and discussing current issues in the work of the courts with judges from the court of first instance and representatives of the Senate – Senator Iriņa Jansone and scientific and analytical adviser Evija Vīnkalne. Also worth noting was the Career Day at the Vidzeme Regional Court, which was attended by a significant number of young people. Meanwhile, judicial assistants welcomed the Judicial Assistants' Day organised by the Vidzeme District Court. In collaboration with the Academy of Justice, a seminar entitled 'The Latvian Language in the Documents of the Vidzeme Regional Court' was organised at the Vidzeme Regional Court in the autumn, led by Anastasija Orehova, Senior Linguist at the International Cooperation and Analysis Division of the Court Administration. Both judges and court staff recognised the importance and usefulness of the seminar.

In the middle of summer, we mourned the passing of our former colleague, Inguna Pinne, the long-serving Chair of the Civil Division. The judge's humanity, professionalism and significant contribution to the development of the judicial system remain a lasting legacy at our court.

In 2025, the staff of the Vidzeme Regional Court continued the established tradition of celebrating holidays together and taking part in team-building activities – a cycling trip and an excursion to Cesvaine Castle, as well as a group visit to our colleagues at the Madona Courthouse.

At the end of the year, we were delighted by the high recognition of our colleagues' work. Tija Skrapste, Assistant to the President of the Court, was awarded the Court Administration's Certificate of Honour for her significant contribution and outstanding achievements in the development of the court system and for her selfless fulfilment of her official duties. Judīte Pērkone, Deputy Head of the Registry, was awarded a Letter of Appreciation from the Court Administration for the exemplary performance of her duties and her significant contribution to the development of the courts.

2025 has been an eventful year at the Vidzeme Regional Court, and I am grateful that, during this year of change, thanks to the professionalism, dedication and integrity with which every judge and court staff member has carried out their duties, we have been able to overcome all challenges, maintaining good performance indicators without compromising on quality.

In 2026, the Vidzeme Regional Court's development objectives are focused on ensuring the stable and sustainable operation of the court, strengthening professional, collaboration-oriented leadership, and promoting the professional development of judges and staff.



Zemgale Regional Court

President of the Zemgale Regional Court
Juris Siliņš

The year 2025 brought significant changes for the Zemgale Regional Court; it was a dynamic year, full of various events.

The 30th anniversary of the re-establishment of the regional courts was celebrated; there were changes in the judges and court staff, and the court in Aizkraukle was relocated to Jēkabpils. Despite the various changes and challenges, the court's objective has remained unchanged – efficiency and public trust.

Judges and staff

The Zemgale Regional Court has 15 approved judicial posts, nine of which are based in Jelgava and six at the Jēkabpils courthouse. In 2025, there were several changes to the composition of judges and staff at the Zemgale Regional Court.

On 1 October 2025, Judge Līga Baltmane-Zepa was transferred to another regional court. 31 October 2025 was the last day of work for long-serving judges of the Zemgale Regional Court, Daina Baltaja and Svetlana Maršāne, who retired.

Two new judges began their work at the Zemgale Regional Court – Judge Baiba Ozoliņa on 1 November 2025 and Judge Inguna Casno on 2 January 2026.



Photograph from the archive of J. Zēlbergs



Photograph by Ilmārs Znotiņš, Office of the President

Two judicial assistants, Liene Liepa and Larina Obeide, court clerks Linda Skrule, Kristīne Graudiņa and Evita Šemeta, and Deputy Head of the Registry Dace Ozola-Ozoliņa, also took up their posts.

We are particularly proud of Andra Audze, formerly a judicial assistant at the Zemgale Regional Court, who was appointed as a district (municipal) court judge by a decision of the Saeima on 16 April 2025.

The average case processing time in 2025 was 5.7 months: 5.6 months for civil cases, 7.2 months for criminal cases, 3.3 months for administrative offence cases, and 2.5 months for enforcement of sentences, which is in line with the projected and approved case processing standard for 2025.

Self-governance and working groups

In 2025, the Zemgale Regional Court also continued to play an active role in the development of the judicial system and the promotion of legal education.

The judges of the Zemgale Regional Court are actively involved in judicial self-governance and various working groups.

The President of the Zemgale Regional Court, Juris Siliņš, serves on the Judicial Council; Judge Anita Misiuna serves on the Judicial Ethics Commission, Judge Marianna Terjuhana on the Judicial Qualifications Committee, and Judge Līga Baltmane-Zepa (a judge at the Zemgale Regional Court until 1 October 2025) on the Judicial Disciplinary Committee.

Judge Inga Putra serves on the board of the Latvian Judges' Association, whilst Judge Aigars Sniedzītis is one of the vice-presidents of the Latvian Judges' Association.

Judge Raimonds Rinčs is a member of the working groups drafting amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law and the Criminal Law, whilst Judge Aigars Sniedzītis is a member of the working group drafting amendments to the Civil Procedure Law.

Judge Līga Baltmane-Zepa (a judge at the Zemgale Regional Court until 1 October 2025) serves on the commission for the national unified professional qualification examination for lawyers. Judge Inese Belicka is a member of the European association of insolvency professionals 'Insol Europe' and sits on the association's judges' working group.

Continuing education and professional development

In 2025, the Zemgale Regional Court organised seminars and training sessions to improve the knowledge and skills of judges and court staff.

Every year, the court hosts meetings between regional court judges and first-instance judges, at which current issues in judicial practice and the most common grounds for overturning or amending judgements are discussed.

The Zemgale Regional Court continues to organise 'Shadow Days' and school visits to the court, thereby encouraging pupils' interest in pursuing careers as lawyers and in other professions within the judiciary, as well as promoting young people's understanding of the judicial system as a whole.

On 2 October and 6 November, the Zemgale Regional Court hosted judicial assistant days, which brought together judicial assistants from district and regional courts in Jelgava, Dobele, Tukums, Bauska, Aizkraukle, Jēkabpils and Ogre. The event served to strengthen professional knowledge and foster cooperation within the judicial system.

A significant event in the history of the Zemgale Regional Court was the relocation of the Aizkraukle Courthouse of the Zemgale Regional Court. From 1 October 2025, the Zemgale Regional Court is located at 39 Neretas Street, Jēkabpils, where the Zemgale District Court also operates.



Photograph from the archive

Performance indicators for 2025

Type of case	Received in 2025	Comparison with 2024 (%)	Cases heard in 2025	Comparison with 2024 (%)	Pending in 2025	Average processing time (months)
Civil cases	275	-6.8%	289	-9.4%	90	5.6
Criminal cases	266	+3.5%	277	+20.4%	136	7.2
Sentence enforcement cases	24	+33.3%	13	-31.6%	12	2.5
Administrative offence cases	183	+157.7%	140	+133.3%	62	3.3
Total (average)	—	—	—	—	—	5.7

The average case processing time in 2025 was 5.7 months: 5.6 months for civil cases, 7.2 months for criminal cases, 3.3 months for administrative offence cases, and 2.5 months for enforcement of sentences, which is in line with the projected and approved case processing standard for 2025.

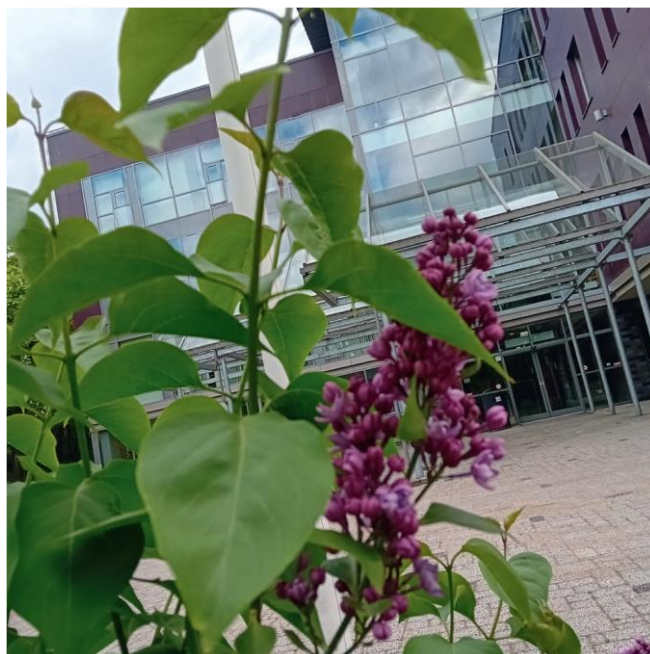
Administrative District Court

President of the Administrative District Court
Aiga Putniņa

For the Administrative District Court, 2025 has been a very busy and challenging year. Last year, the court received 2,493 applications, which is 14.27 per cent more than in 2024. However, only 1,856 cases were initiated, meaning that 25.55 per cent of applications were dismissed at the admissibility stage. Dealing with applications takes up a large part of a judge's daily work and is not always properly appreciated. Firstly, given the principle of objective investigation in administrative proceedings, the judge must ascertain the applicant's true purpose in bringing the matter before the court, on their own initiative, request all documents necessary for deciding the application and ascertain the circumstances relating to them, as well as rule on various procedural requests (for example, regarding the reinstatement of a procedural time limit, exemption from state fees, and so on). Secondly, at this stage, complex legal issues often arise as to whether the application is admissible under administrative procedure at all and whether the person has a subjective right to bring the application before the court. Thirdly, at this stage, the judge may immediately decide to refuse to hear the application if it is manifestly unfounded, or to grant it without further hearing of the case.

The number of cases brought has also increased by 191 cases, or 10.29 per cent, compared with 2024. At the same time, the court has only managed to hear 1,602 cases, which means that the court has not been able to hear the number of cases received during the year; in other words, the case throughput rate is negative.

The negative case throughput has been influenced not only by the increase in the number of applications and cases, but also by the court operating with a reduced number of judges. Over the course of the year, one judge was dismissed from office, two judges were transferred to the Administrative Regional Court, and one judge chose to continue working in a court of general jurisdiction. The absence of any judge is felt and has an impact on the court's overall performance.



Photograph from the Administrative District Court archive

Over the past year, judges have actively taken advantage of opportunities for experience exchange. In March, Judge Agnese Patmalniece began a year-long exchange of experience in the Administrative Cases Department of the Senate, whilst Judge Marina Romanova began a year-long placement at the European Court of Human Rights in September. These visits allow judges to step away from their usual working environment and take on new professional challenges.

At the same time, the court has welcomed two new judges with great pleasure. We are proud that Judge Ilze Butkus comes from the ranks of judicial assistants, having purposefully fulfilled her dream of becoming a judge at this court. Judge Natālija Laveniece-Straupmane, for her part, enriches the judicial team with her extensive experience in public administration. The judges spent most of the past year attending training courses for new judges organised by the Academy of Justice, but have now begun hearing cases in earnest.

The past year also saw changes at the Rēzekne Courthouse. Judge Māris Šļakota has been appointed as its President. Staņislavs Linkevičs, the long-serving President of the Courthouse, has been awarded the Certificate of Honour by the Court Administration for his significant contribution to the development of the Courthouse and for the conscientious performance of his duties.

Alongside their day-to-day duties, our judges continue to serve on various judicial self-governing bodies and committees: on the Judicial Disciplinary Panel – Deputy Chair Ilze Andruškina; on the Judicial Ethics Committee – Judge Līga Biksiniece-Martinova; the Judicial Candidate Selection Commission – Kristīne Brokane, President of the Liepāja Court; and the Judicial Council and the Commission for the Selection of Court Presidents – Guntars Ploriņš, President of the Valmiera Court. Court staff also have their own Court Staff Ethics Commission, on which Gita Puriņa, a judicial assistant, has been elected and is actively serving.

Judges and court staff also continue to play an active role in informing and educating the public on current issues relating to judicial practice. At the end of the year, as part of a series of articles in *Jurista Vārds* on geopolitical challenges, organised on the initiative of the Senate's Department of Administrative Cases, Judges Silvija Kuškina and Lāsma Lipkina prepared an article 'General Principles of Law in Times of Geopolitical Challenges', whilst Jurgita Spigule, the Court President's assistant on asylum matters, wrote an article entitled 'Aspects of National Security and Public Order in Asylum Cases'. Given the topicality of asylum cases, Jurgita Spigule also prepared an article at the beginning of the year

'Political Conviction as a Basis for Granting Asylum in Cases Involving Russian Citizens', thereby providing a comprehensive overview of the court's practice as the court of last instance on these matters. With regard to issues of administrative procedure, judicial assistant Aldis Čerņijs has prepared an article entitled "The role of ancillary decisions in the improvement of legislation", Annija Mazapša, Assistant to the President of the Court for Research and Analysis, has contributed an article entitled 'From *effet utile* to the judgment: the practical application of the directive', and Madara Lindāne, assistant judge, has written an article entitled 'Enforcement of administrative acts in construction and environmental cases: district court practice', which is based on a compilation of case law previously prepared by her for the court's operational needs. These articles will be published in early 2026.

Last year saw the continuation of what has now become a tradition: meetings organised by the Senate's Administrative Cases Department with the Administrative District Courts and the Administrative Regional Court, which serve as an essential platform for discussing current issues. Judicial assistants also attended a meeting with the scientific and analytical advisers and judicial assistants of the Senate's Administrative Cases Department, and had the opportunity to visit the Constitutional Court as part of an experience-sharing visit.

In the autumn, as part of the European Judicial Training Network's bilateral exchange programme, judges from the Slovenian Administrative Court were hosted at the court. During the visit, the judges were introduced to the Latvian court system, its institutional structure and the conduct of court proceedings. Our colleagues spoke highly of both the efficiency of the administrative process and the various technological solutions used to facilitate court proceedings in our country. Meanwhile, the courthouses in Rēzekne and Valmiera hosted the Minister for Justice, Inese Lībiņa-Egneri, as part of a series of regional visits. Current issues regarding the strengthening of national security, the implementation of child-friendly rule of law measures and the organisation of court work were discussed with the Minister.

The biggest challenge of the year was linked to the introduction of various new Court Information System (TIS) solutions and other technological solutions into the court's work, which has required additional time, effort and commitment from judges and court staff. In November 2025, the court began handling cases partially on the new TIS2 platform, which is not yet fully operational. Court staff, together with the Court Administration, are continuing to work on improving the system. Similarly, an increasing number of cases at the court are being processed in e-case format.

We are making the court's working environment more pleasant and attractive ourselves. At the Riga Courthouse, we have set up a playroom for children using our own resources – a practical and heartfelt solution for the summer months, when staff sometimes bring their children to work with them. It can also be used in situations where it is necessary to speak to children during the course of a case. The court has also received a significant gift – a painting by Zita Studente, a judge at the Zemgale District Court, featuring the court's symbol – the lilac. The painting adorns the lobby of the Riga Courthouse and is on display for visitors to view.

Alongside our day-to-day work, spending time together as a team at informal events and activities has also been important. 'Colourful Week' was filled with creative enthusiasm, with colleagues dressing in clothes of a specific colour each day, and the Līgo celebrations were also joyfully observed. The month of national celebrations was imbued with patriotism, during which we also celebrated our colleagues' achievements as they received awards from the Court Administration and the Ministry of Justice. During the brightest time of the year – Christmas – warmth and kindness reigned: we took part in charity campaigns, secretly brought joy to our colleagues and celebrated the festive season together. Meanwhile, our group outings gave us the chance to get some exercise and spend time away from our usual working environment.

During this time of change and intense work, we realised that people are at the heart of everything – every colleague, with their contribution, loyalty and ability to adapt. May 2026, with its Horse energy, inspire new achievements, strengthen our unity and give us the strength to carry on with what we have started!



Riga City Court

President of the Riga City Court

Anda Briede

In 2025, the judges and staff of the Riga City Court were actively involved in various working groups and discussions relating to the planning of judicial system policy, the drafting of various bills, and have also contributed to the professional development of court staff.

In 2025, Judge Kristīne Vinte-Korme, together with representatives from the Ministry of Culture, courts of all instances, the Ombudsman's Office, the National Electronic Media Council, the 'Latvian Journalists' Association' and the Public Media Ombudsman, working within a working group set up by the Ministry of Justice to develop a regulatory framework to strengthen the protection of journalists, researchers, activists and other defenders of the public interest against abusive litigation. On 5 February 2026, the Saeima supported the draft law "Law on the Protection of Persons Engaged in the Public Interest" at its first reading.

Judges Kristīne Vinte-Korme, Dainis Slišāns, Marita Šalta, Santa Sondare, Gunta Sokolova, as well as court staff members Sarmīte Purvinska, Līga Ustinova, Ilze Siliņa-Duljaņinova, Lelde Buša, Elīna Andžāne, Ieva Kairiša, Ilze Liepkalne, Kristīne Vītola, Alise Gašpuite and Zane Rāviņa continued their participation in the Court Administration's working group on 'Improvement of Court Proceedings' to ensure the successful implementation of the E-case programme and to enhance the functionality of the Court Information System.

In 2025, Judge Laura Smukule served on a working group set up by the Ministry of Justice to draft amendments to the Law "On the Application of Corrective Measures", which included judges, representatives of the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Justice and the State Probation Service, with specialists from the Legal Protection Bureau, the Ministry of Health, the Child Protection Centre, the Riga Municipal Police and the Riga Orphan's Court also being invited to participate. The aim of the draft bill is to incorporate the role of the prosecutor into the law, taking into account the amendments to the Criminal Procedure

regarding the right of prosecutors to grant conditional release to accused persons and to apply coercive measures of an educational nature.

Judge Mairita Zadiņa, together with representatives from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Economics, took part in a working group organised by the State Land Service entitled 'Design Laboratory in relation to the unified building registration process'. Fourteen regulatory acts were amended, introducing a unified regulatory framework for the building registration process, from the initiation of the construction process to the formalisation of property rights.

Deputy President of the Court Ieva Zabarovska, Judge Dainis Locs and Judicial Assistant Inga Leškēviča took part in the Ministry of Justice's working group titled 'Enforcement of obligations on court notice', the work of which resulted in the improvement and modernisation of forms within the Court Information System, ensuring more convenient electronic communication and data processing.

Judicial assistant Viktorija Fadejeva served on the Audit Commission of the State Unified Computerised Land Register of the Court Administration from 17 April to 12 December 2025, served on the Audit Commission of the State Unified Computerised Land Register of the Court Administration.

Judge Kristīne Vinte-Korme developed a lecture course entitled 'Training for New Civil Court Judicial Assistants' and conducted three training seminars for judicial assistants at the Academy of Justice.

Judicial assistant Zane Lejniece developed training programmes and methodological materials to ensure the professional development of court staff in the field of civil law: 'Training for new court clerks in the field of civil law'; 'Understanding court procedures in the courtroom in the field of civil law'; 'Case management for court clerks in the field of civil law', and delivered three training seminars for court clerks, which took place at the Academy of Justice.

Judges Dolorosa Bambere, Inga Krigena-Jurkāne, Inga Pujate, Matīss Vingris and Ilona Sabīne Sviķe took part in a seminar organised by the Patent Board in Jelgava on 9 and 10 September 2025, which was dedicated to current issues in the field of intellectual property rights protection.

On 24 October 2025, a discussion between judges from the Court of Appeal and the court of first instance, initiated by the Riga Regional Court, took place at the Riga City Court on issues arising in civil cases.

On 7 October 2025, Judge Inga Krīģena-Jurkāne was elected as a member of the Judicial Council.

In 2025, judges and court staff of the Riga City Court actively participated in the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN) AIAKOS exchange programme, strengthening professional cooperation between the judicial institutions of the European Union and promoting the visibility of the work of Latvian courts.

- Court staff members Madara Gūtmane, Tatjana Nazarova, Artūrs Skutāns and Zane Lejniece hosted an Italian delegation from 12 to 16 May 2025, who attended a court hearing presided over by Judge Jānis Silickis. Judge Dagnija Palčevska and judicial assistant Madara Gūtmane introduced the delegation to the European Small Claims *Procedure* and alternative dispute resolution procedures in Latvia. A presentation was given on the Court Information System's e-case platform and the court's technical equipment, which ensures an efficient and digitised judicial process in Latvia.
- On 17 June 2025, Judges Dans Dibaņins, Zanda Stara, Madara Lapa Kleinberga, Anna Mihailova, Doloresa Bambere, the Court President's assistants Una Zīrāka and Natālija Kaufelde,

as well as the Head of the Registry, Ilvija Pentjuša, welcomed a group of judges and prosecutors from Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Romania, giving them the opportunity to attend a court hearing presided over by Judge Laura Smukule.

- On 5 November 2025, a group of judges and prosecutors from Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Belgium and Romania was welcomed by the President's assistant, Natālija Kaufelde, who organised a visit to a court hearing presided over by Judge Mārtiņš Tupureinis.

In addition, in the spring of 2025, Judge Zane Aldiņa, together with the court panel, hosted judges, prosecutors, lawyers and police experts from the Netherlands, providing collegial support in organising an off-site court hearing.

Judge Inga Pētersone took part in the EJTN-organised seminar 'Mediation and Conciliation' in Zagreb, Croatia, from 5 to 6 November 2025, took part in the EJTN-organised seminar 'Mediation and Conciliation' in Zagreb, Croatia.

Similarly, in the second half of 2025, renovation work was carried out to modernise Room 405 on the 4th floor of the Riga City Court building at 8 Abrenes Street, Riga. The room has been fitted out both as a courtroom for hearings with a large number of participants and as a venue for meetings, seminars or conferences.

With the aim of optimising and centralising the work of the Riga City Court's investigating judges, work began at the end of 2025 to relocate these judges to the court's main building at 8 Abrenes Street, Riga.



Photograph from the Riga City Court archive

Riga District Court

President of the Riga District Court
Ieva Čudina

Riga In order to achieve the objective set by Ieva Čudina, President of the Riga District Court – to ensure that cases falling within the jurisdiction of the Riga District Court are heard in an efficient, swift and high-quality judicial process – targeted efforts to improve the court's operations continued in 2025 as well. The structural and organisational measures introduced in 2024 yielded positive results; consequently, in 2025, the main emphasis was placed on consolidating the reforms already underway, improving the quality of work and ensuring the sustainable development of processes.

In 2025, efforts continued to balance judges' caseloads and further develop specialisation. Taking into account the positive experience of the previous year in hearing cases of administrative offences, the model was retained whereby these categories of cases are primarily heard by specialist judges, whilst criminal judges are called upon to stand in as substitutes. This has ensured a steady pace of case hearings and prevented a backlog of cases from building up. At the same time, the principle of civil case allocation – which does away with the internal division based on territorial jurisdiction – has continued to prove its effectiveness: the handling of cases has become more consistent, and disparities in judges' workloads across different court buildings have been reduced.

A key focus for 2025 was the consolidation of the digitalisation process. As the second phase of the e-case system's roll-out continued, improvements were made to electronic document management and the organisation of remote court hearings. The proportion of cases heard electronically continued to rise, particularly in the civil litigation sector. Judges and court staff were actively involved in the Court Administration's working groups, putting forward proposals to improve the functionality of the Court Information System. Practical experience enabled the identification of necessary technical improvements to reduce the administrative burden and speed up the circulation of procedural documents.



Photograph from the archives of the Riga District Court

In the area of human resources management, the optimisation of the court's operations continued in 2025. Following the reorganisation implemented in 2024, its effectiveness was assessed and, where necessary, adjustments were made to the allocation of duties. The operations of the court's client service centre were strengthened, ensuring easier access to information and case files. Internal communication between departments was improved, and training seminars were organised for staff on professional ethics, a customer-service culture and the use of digital tools.

In 2025, particular attention was paid to the professional development of judges. Judges continued to participate in both national and international seminars and experience-sharing events. Judges Gunta Viļumsone, Vineta Mazure and the President of the Court, I. Čudina, acquired new skills at international seminars in Lithuania, Greece and Poland.

To ensure the professional development and knowledge enhancement of the court's support staff, judicial assistants from the Riga District Court also undertook overseas assignments. In 2025, judicial assistants Līga Pommere and Arta Mieze took part in a bilateral exchange programme at the First Administrative Court in Kavala, Greece; in addition, judicial assistant A. Mieze took part in a study visit to the Court of Justice of the European Union in Luxembourg.

In 2025, the Riga District Court hosted several foreign delegations, sharing its experience and updates on the

Latvian judicial system. For example, on 5 March, the Riga District Court in Riga hosted an international delegation from the International Department of the National School of Justice in Greece. The aim of the visit was to familiarise themselves with the Latvian judicial system and gain practical experience of how court proceedings are conducted. During the visit, the delegation was addressed by Baiba Ābele, Deputy President of the Riga District Court, who provided a comprehensive overview of the Latvian court system and the conduct of proceedings in criminal and administrative offence cases. The guests had the opportunity to observe a court hearing in which a criminal case was being heard via videoconference. Following the hearing, the participants engaged actively in a discussion with the judge, asking questions about both the judicial process and the functioning of the judicial system. Guntis Lauskis, Deputy President of the Riga District Court, supplemented the overview of the Latvian judicial system with an informative video presentation, gave a tour of the court premises and answered the guests' questions.

On 8 May 2025, a delegation from the Armenian judicial system visited the Riga District Court in Jūrmala. During the meeting, the analysis of statistical data and its use in making evidence-based decisions were discussed, as well as aspects of court workload management, including the case prioritisation approach and standards for case processing times, as well as Latvia's experience in using e-case management systems, artificial intelligence and other technologies for court administration.

Meanwhile, on 5 November 2025, the Riga District Court hosted a group of young (prospective) judges and prosecutors from abroad as part of an exchange programme. The delegation was received by Baiba Ābele, Deputy President of the Riga District Court, and Judge Ilona Ozoliņa-Kļaviņa. During the visit, the delegation attended court hearings, including a discussion with judges from the Riga District Court on the specific features of civil and criminal proceedings, including the specific features of sentencing in Latvia, compared with the countries represented by the delegation.

In recognition of their conscientious and creative work in promoting the development of the judicial system and the Latvian legal system, Vita Vjaterē, Deputy Chair of the Riga District Court, and Ingrīda Bite were awarded Second Class Certificates of Commendation and 'silver pens' by the Ministry of Justice.

To highlight the importance of court staff and to acknowledge their contribution to the work of the court, the following awards were presented in 2025: Madara Ozola, judicial assistant at Riga District Court, received a Diploma of Honour from the Ministry of Justice; Kristīne Mārka, judicial assistant, received a Diploma of Honour from the Ministry of Justice; Marija Milere, court clerk, received a Diploma of Honour from the Ministry of Justice; Lauma Strika, judicial assistant, received a Letter of Thanks from the Court Administration; Irina Grīnfogele, court interpreter, received a Letter of Commendation from the Court Administration; a Letter of Commendation from the Court Administration to court archivist Lilita Kaļiņina, and a Letter of Appreciation from the Court Administration to registry head Kristīne Skosareva.

In cooperation with the Court Administration and the Court Buildings Agency, renovation works were carried out at the Riga District Court in Riga and Sigulda to ensure a comfortable working environment for judges and court staff. The renovation and refurbishment work carried out improved working conditions for staff and ensured the court's accessibility to visitors. The most significant achievement was the installation of a modern and functional conference room at the Riga District Court in Riga, at 6 Aiviekstes Street.

At the same time, 2025 was also marked by challenges for the court. The caseload remained high, particularly in criminal cases involving complex evidence and a large number of parties to the proceedings. Staff turnover and the need to ensure the integration of new judges and staff into the team presented additional challenges. However, thanks to targeted work organisation and collegial cooperation, the court was able to maintain a steady workflow and meet the approved case-hearing deadlines.

Overall, 2025 was a period of stable development and consolidation for the Riga District Court. The reforms implemented previously have yielded tangible results, and the court continues to develop in a targeted manner to ensure high-quality, efficient judicial work that serves the public interest.

Kurzeme District Court

President of the Kurzeme District Court

Madars Plepis

The year 2025 was a professionally active one for the Kurzeme District Court, marked by significant steps forward and the strengthening of professional dialogue at both national and international levels. Compared with 2024, the court received a slightly lower number of cases in 2025 – 4,040 – whilst the average case processing time increased slightly but remained low at 5.4 months. The court continued its work on streamlining the litigation process, implementing digitalisation solutions and strengthening the professional development of judges and staff. The court's case clearance rate has also increased significantly – in 2024 it stood at 90 per cent, whereas in 2025 it had already reached 113 per cent, which demonstrates the court's ability to organise its work effectively and ensure the swift progress of cases.

It should be noted that in 2025 the number of enforcement proceedings initiated by way of a warning increased significantly, as the volume of such cases almost doubled compared with the previous year following the entry into force of amendments to the Civil Procedure Law. In 2024, an average of 1,936.2 such cases were received per judge, whereas in 2025 this figure had already reached 3,737.8 cases. In response to the significantly increased workload, the court undertook targeted adjustments to its work organisation and expanded the capacity of the staff involved – judges specialising in criminal cases were also involved in hearing cases, as were additional judicial assistants and court clerks. The measures taken ensured the smooth progress of cases and maintained continuity of work even under conditions of increased workload.

On 25 September 2025, Judges' Assistants' Day was held at the Kurzeme District Court in Liepāja, attended by judges' assistants from all courthouses. During the event, participants heard presentations from Dzintra Balta, a senator of the Civil Cases Department of the Senate of the Supreme Court, and from the Department of Case Law and Scientific Analysis.



Photographs from the archives of the Kurzeme District Court

The judicial assistants gained an insight into the criteria and process for the selection of judges, and also took part in discussions on opportunities for professional development and the enhancement of legal knowledge. The event promoted the professional development of court staff and strengthened cooperation between colleagues.

On 8 October 2025, a delegation of representatives from the Ukrainian judiciary visited the Kurzeme District Court in Kuldīga. During the visit, the Ukrainian colleagues familiarised themselves with reforms to the Latvian court system, the development of court infrastructure and digitisation processes. The delegation was given a presentation on the e-case system, the digitisation of document circulation and the use of video conferencing in court proceedings. Discussions also covered the impact of the court merger process on the efficiency and accessibility of the courts' work. This cooperation is particularly significant at a time when Ukraine is implementing judicial reforms amidst the war.

On 6 February 2025, as part of a regional visit, Inese Lībiņa-Egnere visited the Kurzeme District Court in Ventspils, where she met with judges and court staff. During the meeting, topical issues were discussed regarding the strengthening and protection of national security, the development of a child-friendly rule of law, and the fight against violence in society, as well as matters relating to the organisation of the court's work. On 29 October 2025, the Minister visited the Kurzeme District Court in Kuldīga. During the meeting with the judges, key issues regarding the court's caseload, the number of judges in the region and the strengthening of the institution of judicial assistants. Particular attention was paid to streamlining judicial proceedings and opportunities to improve the organisation of work in order to ensure high-quality and timely case handling.

In 2025, Judges Ilze Fišere and Ilona Rudzīte were

awarded the Ministry of Justice's Letter of Commendation and a 'silver' quill. Judicial assistants Linda Taurēna and Baiba Kristovska were honoured with Diplomas of Honour. Court staff also received awards from the Court Administration: Notation of Gratitude was awarded to court clerk Kristīne Andersone, whilst Notation of Commendation were awarded to court session secretaries Līga Ose and Elīna Sēle, as well as court clerk Kristīne Sūngaile. These awards recognise the professional contribution and high standard of work of the court's staff.

To promote team cohesion and team spirit, joint internal events for judges and staff were held in 2025. On 14 June 2025 a group hike was organised in Ventspils along the route from the Staldzene Cliffs to the Ovīši Lighthouse, during which participants covered a distance of approximately 18 km along the coast. At the end of the

hike, participants took part in a tour of the Ovīši Lighthouse and its grounds, exploring the historic site and its surroundings. Sports games were also organised as an annual sporting event.

In 2026, the Kurzeme District Court will continue its work on refining digitisation processes, improving work organisation and strengthening the professional capacity of judges and staff. Particular attention will be paid to stabilising case processing times and balancing the workload, taking into account the projected reduction in the number of judges. Similarly, in 2026, it is planned to begin, for the first time, the transfer of audio recordings of court hearings to digital storage at the Latvian State Film, Photo and Sound Archive, which will significantly modernise the process of storing court documents and ensure modern access to archive materials.



Kuldīga. Photograph from the archives of the Kurzeme District Court

Latgale District Court

President of the Latgale District Court
Pēteris Novičenoks

The Latgale District Court has long been facing a shortage of judges, which is leading to an excessive workload for judges and staff. The situation is particularly difficult at the Balvi Courthouse, where no judges have been working since the first half of 2025, whilst at the Ludza Courthouse only one judge has been working for a long time.

In 2025, the total number of cases received by the court (including applications for the enforcement of obligations on court notice (*saistību izpilde brīdinājuma kārtībā*)) increased by 37.7 per cent. At the same time, the total number of civil cases received by the court fell by 18.7 per cent. These changes in the proportions of the categories of cases received by the court can be explained by amendments to the Civil Procedure Law, which have made applications for the enforcement of obligations on court notice a more procedurally attractive means of debt-compared to the simplified procedure. It should also be noted that the shift in the procedure for filing claims from the simplified procedure to applications for the enforcement of obligations on court notice (not only critically increased the workload of judges specialising in land registry matters, but also, in the second half of 2025, created the need to refer more than 4,600 applications for enforcement of obligations on court notice, which had accumulated in the queue, to judges specialising in civil matters for adjudication. Therefore, when assessing judges' caseloads in absolute terms, it can be concluded that the amendments to the Civil Procedure Law not only significantly increased the caseload of judges specialising in land registry matters, but also failed to ease the workload of judges specialising in civil cases.

The number of criminal cases received by the court has also fallen by 13.2 per cent compared with 2024. However, given that the number of judges specialising in criminal cases has fallen from ten to eight, this reduction in the number of criminal cases received has not alleviated the workload of judges specialising in criminal cases. The geopolitical situation has also brought about certain changes, leading to a significant increase in the proportion of criminal offences relating to the protection of the state border and proceedings concerning criminally obtained property referred to the court.



Photograph from the archives of the Latgale District Court

Due to the long-standing vacancies for judges at the court, the involvement of staff from the vacant judges' division in the work of the active judicial panel is indispensable for ensuring the court's normal functioning. The contribution of judicial assistants and court clerks to the performance of the court's functions is not merely a matter of rhetoric – behind it lies the selfless work, experience and knowledge of court staff, which, within the limits of what is possible, enables the court to fulfil its functions even under difficult circumstances. We eagerly await the implementation of the reform of the judicial assistant system, which will enhance the prestige of the judicial assistant role and improve its competitiveness in the labour market.

In 2025, the long-awaited and carefully planned merger of the Daugavpils courthouses was carried out. Judges and staff specialising in the Land Register were relocated from the building on Gimnāzijas Street to the courthouse on 18 November Street, thereby ensuring convenience for court visitors in terms of access to court services within a single courthouse, whilst also increasing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the court's administrative management and building maintenance. We look forward to the possibility of finding slightly larger premises in the future and accommodating all court staff in a single building in Rēzekne.

In 2025, staff of the Latgale District Court took part in an exchange of experience at first-instance and appeal courts in Norway and Sweden as part of the Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme, gaining insights and valuable information on document management practices within judicial institutions and the role of court staff in ensuring the smooth running of the courts.

Vidzeme District Court

President of the Vidzeme District Court

Līga Ašitoka

The past year has been dynamic and significant for the Vidzeme District Court – marked by changes in the court's composition and new initiatives that have strengthened both professional capacity and team cohesion. Day-to-day work on case hearings has proceeded alongside purposeful development and well-considered steps for the future.

Three new judges joined the court's bench – Madara Štorha, who serves at the Vidzeme District Court in Limbaži; Dina Valdmāne, who joined from the Riga City Court; and Simona Gmireka from the Latgale District Court. At the same time, four judges stepped down from their posts, whilst one colleague continued his professional development at the Vidzeme Regional Court.

One of the most significant initiatives of the year was Judges' Assistants' Day – the first event of its kind at the court, which brought together judges' assistants not only from the Vidzeme District Court, but also from the Vidzeme Regional Court and the Administrative District Court

at the Valmiera Courthouse. It provided an opportunity for a professional and open discussion on the development opportunities for judicial assistants, the enhancement of their skills, and their role in ensuring the quality of the court's work. In addition to professional issues, attention was also paid to managing the risks of stress and burnout, effective communication and conflict resolution. This initiative demonstrated that investing in the development of support staff is an investment in the quality of the court's work as a whole.



General meeting. Photograph from the archives of the Vidzeme District Court



General meeting. Photograph from the archives of the Vidzeme District Court

Meetings with the Minister for Justice, Inese Lībiņa-Egner, were also significant; during these, issues relating to the continuity of court operations in the region near the state border, the provision of human resources and the progress of the judicial assistant reform were discussed. These discussions once again highlighted the role of regional courts in safeguarding public rights and in the context of national security.

The annual general meeting of judges served as an opportunity to take stock of achievements and, at the same time, to outline future directions for development. Particularly valuable was the experience shared by Rihards Gulbis, Scientific and Analytical Adviser to the Senate's Civil Cases Department, on the practical use of artificial intelligence in court proceedings, highlighting the potential of the technology and its responsible integration into court work.

At the end of the year, individual professional contributions were also recognised. Judicial assistants Vita Cielava and Santa Eislere were honoured with a Letter of Commendation from the Court Administration for exemplary performance of their duties and a significant contribution to the development of the courts. Meanwhile, court administrator Gatis Plusniņš was awarded a Certificate of Commendation for his conscientious and creative work.

Alongside its professional activities, the court continued to strengthen its internal culture and mutual cooperation. It has become a tradition for colleagues to visit one another in one of the towns where the court operates – on this occasion, colleagues from Madona hosted the others and introduced them to Cesvaine. Meanwhile, a joint step challenge, in which more than 13 million steps were clocked up over four weeks, demonstrated the team spirit that extends beyond the court's day-to-day work. At the end of the year, judges and staff took part in charitable initiatives, providing support to children, the elderly and an animal shelter.

Overall, the past year demonstrated that, alongside the court's core mission – to deliver fair and high-quality justice – professional development, mutual cooperation and social responsibility are also of great importance. It is precisely this balanced approach that forms a stable foundation for the court's future growth.



Photograph from the archives of the Vidzeme District Court



Clerks' Day. Photograph from the archives of the Vidzeme District Court

Zemgale District Court

President of the Zemgale District Court
Iveta Salaka

The year 2025 was marked by systematic work to improve the efficiency and quality of court proceedings, whilst continuing the work already begun on the gradual introduction of e-cases. By conducting case hearings through an efficient and well-organised court process, we strengthened the court's ability to provide the public with accessible, timely and high-quality judicial protection.



Photograph by Ilmārs Znotiņš,
Office of the President

Last year, the Zemgale District Court employed 53 judges and 183 staff members. The ranks of the judges were joined by a new judge, Andra Audze, who took the judicial oath before the President of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs, at Riga Castle on 4 September 2025. We are

proud to welcome our colleague to the court's team, as she began her professional career at our court as a court clerk.

Last year, the average duration for the examination of civil and criminal cases at the court was 5.9 months, and for administrative offence cases – 3.8 months.

In the second half of last year, one of the challenges facing the court was the 75 per cent increase in the number of applications received for the enforcement of obligations by court notice (*saistību izpilde brīdinājuma kārtībā*), resulting in a significant increase in the workload for judges and staff specialising in land registry matters; due to their lack of capacity to deal with the backlog of SPIBK applications, all judges were involved in their examination. It should be noted that the number of applications examined in land register cases also increased slightly last year.

Last year, the court played an active role in the development of the judicial system. Judges and staff were involved in the self-governance of the judiciary and in various working groups. Consequently, the number of vacant judicial posts at the court fell last year from nine

to eight. Court President Iveta Salaka – on the Judges'



Photograph from the archives of the Zemgale District Court

Qualifications Committee; Deputy Court Presidents Adrija Kasakovska and Gita Zenfa – on the Judges' Ethics Commission; Deputy Court President Kristīne Vanaga – on the Judges' Disciplinary Committee; whilst the 2025 was generally characterised by a decrease in the number of cases received in civil and criminal matters by an average of 16 per cent, whilst the number of administrative offence cases and enforcement cases received increased by 8.2% and 9% respectively, and the number of investigations rose by 14.6%.

The Zemgale District Court managed to hear more cases than it received across all categories, excluding criminal cases, ensuring a steady throughput of cases, meeting the set standards for case hearing times and reducing the backlog of cases by 21 per cent.

Court Clerk Sintija Mežale – on the Judicial Ethics Commission. Deputy President of the Court Adrija Kasakovska continued to perform the duties of President of the Latvian Judges' Association, whilst Judge Līga Ašmane served on the Board of the Latvian Judges' Association and, at the same time, participated in the working group drafting amendments to the Civil Procedure Law.

Judges and staff took an active interest in training courses organised by the Judicial Academy and participated in training events abroad with a view to enhancing their professional skills. Judge Nellija Paņkiva continued her participation in a long-term training exchange programme at the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The judges and staff are the pride of the Zemgale District Court. In 2025, the Ministry of Justice and the Court Administration once again honoured judges and staff for their significant contribution to the development of Latvia's legal system.

On 14 November, the following received awards from the

Ministry of Justice: Court President Iveta Salaka – a First Class Certificate of Recognition from the Ministry of Justice and a 'gold' pen; Judge Lilita Bārbale – a Second Class Certificate of Recognition from the Ministry of Justice and a 'silver pen'; and Assistant Judge Ineta Lībere – a Diploma of Honour from the Ministry of Justice.

On 20 November, the following received awards from the Court Administration: Deputy Head of the Registry Inga Siliņa – a Certificate of Honour from the Court Administration, Court Consultant Dzidra Pričina and Court Clerk Lāsma Rudēvica – a Letter of Thanks from the Court Administration; Judge Zita Studente, Judicial Assistant Natālija Siņuka and Court Clerk Evija Sāviča – a Certificate of Commendation from the Court Administration.

The past year was also rich in various events and developments aimed at promoting the growth of the court's operations, improving skills and gaining new insights.

On 25 April, a meeting of civil judges from the Zemgale Regional Court and the Zemgale District Court was held at the Tukums Courthouse to discuss current issues in civil law. The meeting was also attended by Normunds Salenieks, Head of the Department of Civil Cases of the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, on 26 September, a meeting between representatives of the Zemgale Regional Court and the Senate's Criminal Division took place at the Zemgale Regional Court in Jelgava to discuss current issues in judicial practice; Judge Zita Studente also took part in the meeting.



Photograph from the archives of the Zemgale District Court

On 15 May, as part of a regional visit, the Minister for Justice, Inese Lībiņa-Egnere, visited the Zemgale District Court in Jēkabpils, taking part in the opening ceremony of the State Land Service's regional archive and meeting with the President of the Court, Iveta Salaka, judges and staff.

On 23 May, a face-to-face training session on the use of the e-case portal www.elieta.lv, organised by the Court Administration in cooperation with the Latvian Council of Sworn Advocates, took place at the Jelgava Courthouse; prosecutors and sworn advocates from the Zemgale Judicial District also took part in the training.

On 1 October, in order to find the most cost-effective solution for the use of premises, the Aizkraukle Courthouse of the Zemgale Regional Court was relocated to the Zemgale District Court building in Jēkabpils. The official ceremony, attended by the Minister for Justice, Inese Lībiņa-Egnere, took place on 14 January 2026.

On 2 October at the Zemgale Regional Court and on 6 November at the Zemgale District Court in Jēkabpils, a Judicial Assistants' Day was held with the aim of jointly strengthening professional knowledge and promoting cooperation within the judicial system, bringing together judicial assistants from the regional and district courts in Jelgava, Dobeles, Tukums, Aizkraukle and Jēkabpils.

On 8 October, as part of an exchange of experience, the Zemgale District Court in Tukums hosted a delegation from the High Council of Justice of Ukraine. During the meeting, Deputy President of the Court Adrija Kasakovska introduced the guests to the Zemgale District Court and presented statistics on the court's operations.

On 6 November in Tukums and on 16 December in Jelgava, Andris Munda, Director of the Court Administration, and representatives of the Information Systems Development Department held meetings with judges and staff to discuss issues relating to the development of the e-criminal case system. A significant contribution to fostering and strengthening legal awareness is the dialogue between judges and the public through the mass media.

On 29 March, on the 'Delfi' website, Judge Zita Studente expressed the view that **businesses should pay greater attention to the protection of trade secrets**, whilst on 2 June, in her article '**Minors must be informed about what content may be shared online**', the judge urged parents of children and young people to discuss the key areas they need to be aware of when using the internet.

In a LETA article published on 24 July on the 'Apollo' website, the public had the opportunity to read Judge Agnese Adgere's explanation of **why the Russian citizen accused of desecrating a memorial to legionnaires had been fully acquitted**.

On 19 September, on the Court Administration's website, new judge Andra Audze shared her professional experience of career progression in an article **entitled 'Growth begins with courage. My path to becoming a judge'**, encouraging others not to be afraid and to take this step.

On 2 December, Judge Nellija Paņkiva, together with Vineta Bei, legal adviser in the office of Inga Reine, a judge at the General Court of the EU, contributed to an article in the magazine Jurista Vārds '**An independent and impartial court: principles and current issues in their application under European Union law**', provided an insight into the principles of an independent and impartial court guaranteed under European Union law and current issues in their application, both in relation to the Court of Justice of the European Union and the courts of the EU Member States.

(Documents from the Zemgale District Court are available at <https://www.tiesas.lv>)



E. Zivarte, Zemgale District Court, Tukums



E. Zivarte, Zemgale District Court, Tukums

Alongside their daily work, judges and staff uphold long-established traditions, hobbies and talents. For the second year running, the court held its 'Clean-up Day'. Meanwhile, judges Zita Studente and Glorija Sorokina share a passion for painting. Last year, the judges inspired **their colleagues** by **presenting them with paintings** and giving them the opportunity to view them **at exhibitions**.



Photo of Z. Studente's painting 'Lilacs' on the Court Administration's website



Photo of Judge G. Sorokina's painting "The Sea" on the Baltic International Academy's website

Court of Economic Affairs

President of the Court of Economic Affairs
Miķelis Zumbergs

On 21 February, a delegation of judges from the Court of Economic Affairs met with the Minister for Justice Inese Lībiņa-Egnere



During the meeting, the court's performance to date and its future direction were discussed. I. Lībiņa-Egnere emphasised that, given the Court of Economic Affairs' ('the CEA') work, which has been well received at international level, it is necessary to begin expanding the CEA's jurisdiction to include new categories of civil cases, as well as to ensure that the CEA hears criminal proceedings that are consistent with the purpose for which the court was established.

In February, the CEA welcomed Aigars Strupiņš, Chair of the Judicial Council, and Senator Indra Meldere, a representative of the Judicial Qualifications Committee



The judges of the CEA and representatives of the Judicial Council discussed current issues within the judicial system.

Strupiņš provided an update on the Judicial Council's achievements and this year's priorities. The judges of the CEA emphasised the need to strengthen the court's capacity – by increasing the number of judges, providing more support staff and expanding the premises. Case processing times were also discussed, and the parties agreed to continue the dialogue on the court's development, involving the Ministry of Justice as well.

On 17 March, Miķelis Zumbergs, President of the Economic Court, gave an interview to the LV portal on the toughest challenges facing the work of the court



Miķelis Zumbergs pointed out that the CEA receives around 120 civil cases, 105 criminal cases and around 200 proceedings concerning criminally obtained property each year, which places a significant burden on the court. More than 400 proceedings concerning criminal assets have been linked to 'ABLV Bank'. At present, the volume of criminal proceedings significantly exceeds that of commercial cases.

M. Zumbergs explained that the examination of cases is significantly slowed down by very voluminous criminal cases – on average, 3 defendants, 24 witnesses and 17 volumes per case. Consequently, average processing times are increasing.

On 2 February, guests from the Criminal Intelligence Directorate of the State Police gave a lecture at the CEA on the tracing of cryptocurrencies



Raitis Kalnačs, Head of Section of the Criminal Intelligence Directorate of the Criminal Police, and Chief Inspector Andrejs Andrejsons shared their experience on tracking cryptocurrency, detecting criminally obtained property and exchanging information using ARO Criminal Police Directorate's Criminal Intelligence Directorate, and Chief Inspector Andrejs Matīss.

On 4 April, the CEA took part in Shadow Day



As part of Shadow Day, a shadow was welcomed, who had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the day-to-day work of the CEA, tour the court premises and shadow Judge Miks Čever. Such an experience provides young people with a deeper understanding of how the judicial system operates and its role in ensuring the rule of law in society.

On 15 May, the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia confirmed two judges of the CEA to their posts for an indefinite term

Ļubova Kovaļa obtained a professional bachelor's degree in public law and a qualification as a lawyer from the Latvian Police Academy, as well as a professional master's degree in legal science; she also obtained a Doctor of Laws degree in criminal law from the University of Latvia; she served as a senior inspector in the Economic Crime Combating Department of the Criminal Police Directorate Headquarters, as a prosecutor and deputy chief prosecutor in the Financial and Economic Crime Investigation Division of the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Latvia, and is currently a judge at the CEA.

Miks Čeverš obtained a Bachelor's degree in law and a Professional master's degree in law, as well as his qualification as a lawyer, from the University of Latvia; he has served as a legal adviser, deputy director of department and director of department at the Insolvency Control Service, a lawyer at the law firm 'TRINITI', and a lawyer at the Ministry of Finance; he is currently a judge at the CEA.



Ļubova Kovaļa



Miks Čeverš

On 12 September, colleagues from the Civil Division of the Riga Regional Court visited the CEA



Judges from the Civil Division of the Riga Regional Court met with judges from the CEA to share recommendations on the most frequently observed shortcomings in practice. During the meeting, judges from both courts also discussed the impact of various procedural decisions on the speed and quality of proceedings.

On 20 November, the Court Administration presented an award to two judges from the CEA

The Court Administration presented a Certificate of Recognition to the CEA judge Dagnija Muceniece and judge Ieva Jankovska for the conscientious and creative performance of their duties, thereby contributing to the development of the courts.



Dagnija Muceniece



Ieva Jankovska



DIALOGUE

The Judicial Council's dialogue with the President



During his first visit of the year, on 4 February 2025, Aigars Strupišs, the Chair of the Judicial Council and the President of the Supreme Court, met with the President of Latvia, Edgars Rinkēvičs, to discuss current issues relating to the judiciary and the work of the Judicial Council.

In his discussions with the President, A. Strupišs emphasised that, since taking up the post of Chair, one of his main strategic objectives has been to strengthen the independence of the judiciary. This includes taking over the administrative support functions of the judicial system from the executive and transferring them to the jurisdiction of the judiciary. A. Strupišs drew attention to the progress already made, noting the agreement reached with the Ministry of Justice on the transfer of these functions and the preparation of amendments to the Law on the Judicial Power.

Discussing the priority areas of the Judicial Council's work, A. Strupišs reported that a solid foundation had been laid for the future modernisation of the judicial system, based on planning, statistics and forecasts. However, one of the most important qualitative measures is the improvement of the judge selection procedure. The introduction of a new selection procedure and strict assessment criteria ensures that highly qualified lawyers enter the judicial system and that the most suitable candidates are appointed to judicial posts. At the same time, A. Strupišs pointed out that problems with legal education remain one of the main factors hindering the renewal of human resources within the judicial system. To address the issue of staff shortages, job standards and the

remuneration system must be improved to ensure an attractive working environment. The Judicial Council plans to strengthen the role of the Academy of Justice in implementing a sustainable and effective training system, thereby ensuring the high-quality performance of judicial and prosecutorial functions.

In conclusion, A. Strupišs informed the President of the compilation of case law prepared by the Supreme Court, which relates to the imposition of penalties for criminal offences against national security, and the progress of the selection process for the Prosecutor-General.

The Judicial Council's dialogue with the courts and regional visits

To ensure a direct and effective exchange of information and views with judges, representatives of the Judicial Council also undertook several visits to Latvian courts in 2025. The aim of the visits was to discuss current issues relating to the work of the Judicial Council and the courts with the judges. With the participation of representatives from the Judicial Candidate Selection Committee and the Judicial Qualifications Board, discussions were held on current issues relating to the selection process for judicial candidates. In 2025, members of the Judicial Council visited a total of two district (city) courts and two regional courts.

At these meetings, A. Strupišs reported on the work carried out by the Judicial Council over the past year and the planned areas of activity for this year. There are plans to transfer the administrative support functions of the court system from the executive to the judicial institutions, enshrining this in the Law on the Judicial Power. There are also plans to attract new staff with legal qualifications to the judicial system by improving job standards and the remuneration system for support staff, as well as to strengthen the role of the Academy of Justice. Meanwhile, representatives of the courts briefed the Judicial Council on the specific challenges and current issues facing their respective courts.

Visit to the Administrative Court



On 10 February 2025, the Chair of the Judicial Council, A. Strupišs, and the Chair of the Judicial Candidate Selection Committee, Dzintra Balta, a Senator of the Supreme Court, met with judges of the Administrative Regional Court to discuss current issues relating to the work of the Judicial Council and the courts.

The judges of the Administrative Regional Court pointed out that interest in positions within the courts is low, and that one of the main reasons for this is inadequate remuneration. The judges emphasised the shortage of qualified staff in the courts and the need to refine the criteria for awarding bonuses in order to boost the motivation of existing staff. Attention was also drawn to pay inequalities within the judiciary; for example, the pay of a prosecutor's assistant differs significantly from that of a judge's assistant. When discussing the categories of cases heard by the Administrative Regional Court, the judges noted that the examination of cases is hampered by a shortage of qualified experts, particularly in healthcare cases and matters relating to the operations of medical institutions. Attention was also drawn to the heavy workload of experts, which further complicates the timings of case hearings.

Taking these considerations into account, representatives of the Judicial Council highlighted two measures: the case weighting project and the selection of candidates for judicial office. A. Strupišs emphasised that the case prioritisation project should be used as a tool to enable court presidents to plan the courts' work effectively, based on objective indicators. Dz. Balta, meanwhile, discussed with the judges the selection of candidates for judicial office and ways to improve the process.

A. Strupišs noted that in 2026 the Academy of Justice will commence training for candidates for judicial office to ensure they are fully prepared for the selection process.

Visit to the Court of Economic Affairs



On 24 February 2025, the Chair of the Judicial Council, A. Strupišs, and Senator Indra Meldere, a representative of the Judicial Qualifications Committee, met with judges from the Court of Economic Affairs.

The Chair of the Judicial Council discussed case processing times with the judges of the Court of Economic Affairs. The judges pointed out that the court handles complex criminal cases involving a large volume of evidence, with numerous defendants, victims and witnesses. Similarly, the handling of criminal cases is significantly affected by the workload of lawyers and their involvement in other court proceedings. Consequently, there has been a noticeable increase in the backlog of cases at the Court of Economic Affairs. The judges proposed improving the pre-trial investigation stage of criminal proceedings so that the examination of witnesses in the courtroom would only be permitted where there are substantial grounds for doing so.

When discussing the work of the Court of Economic Affairs, the judges pointed out that there is a need to strengthen the court's capacity and increase the number of judges at this court. They also drew attention to the fact that, whilst the court has good technical facilities, there is a shortage of support staff and it would be desirable to expand the premises available to the court, including enlarging the courtrooms. The judges pointed out that a large proportion of the court's caseload consists of criminal cases concerning the laundering of criminally obtained funds, and that the court has established a consistent approach to these cases.

A. Strupiņš agreed with the judges of the Court of Economic Affairs to continue the dialogue on the court's future development and the resolution of problems, also involving the Ministry of Justice. Senator I. Meldere, for her part, provided information on the process of evaluating judges' professional performance and the nature of the information taken into account in such evaluations.

Visit to the Riga District Court



On 3 March 2025, the Chair of the Judicial Council, A. Strupiņš; the Chair of the Judicial Candidate Selection Committee, Senator Dz. Balta, a member of the Judges' Qualifications Committee; Sanita Strakše, a judge at the Riga City Court; and Andris Munda, Director of the Court Administration, met with judges from the Riga District Court.

Baiba Ābele, Deputy President of the Riga District Court, provided information on case processing times at the Riga District Court before and after the reform, and highlighted the benefits of the reform – optimisation of resources, faster case processing times and improved efficiency of the court system.

Dz. Balta discussed the judge selection procedure with the judges and emphasised that the majority of candidates fail the test of basic professional knowledge – a test conducted in the second round of selection. In subsequent rounds, the number of unsuccessful candidates is lower, but the main obstacle to progressing further is the inability to independently resolve legal issues. At the same time, the Judicial Council is considering the possibility of announcing a selection process within the jurisdiction of the courts of general jurisdiction, with separate specialisations in civil and criminal cases,

in order to increase the number of candidates. A. Strupiņš emphasised that there is a particularly acute shortage of judges specialising in criminal cases; therefore, in the long term, the Judicial Council plans to

seek solutions to improve the organisation of the courts' work and address the issue of judicial specialisation.

S. Strakše discussed with judges from the Riga District Court the process of evaluating a judge's professional performance, as well as the evaluation procedure when a judge transfers to a regional court. S. Strakše emphasised that the aim of the evaluation of judges is not to find faults in their work, but rather to objectively assess their professional performance. Judges from the Riga District Court pointed out that there is a shortage of qualified staff in the courts, and therefore the issue of training for court staff needs to be addressed. The judges emphasised that this issue is crucial, as they have to devote a significant proportion of their working time to training court staff on both technical and legal matters.

A. Munda reported that video training courses have been developed for judicial assistants and court clerks, and that the Academy of Justice plans to organise training for court staff to enhance their qualifications.

Visit to the Riga Regional Court, meeting with judges of the Civil Division



On 28 April 2025, the Chair of the Judicial Council, A. Strupiņš, the Chair of the Judicial Candidate Selection Committee, Senator Dz. Balta, Chair of the Judicial Candidate Selection Committee, and Senator I. Meldere, a member of the Judicial Qualifications Panel, met with judges from the Civil Division of the Riga Regional Court. The Chair of the Judicial Council A. Strupiņš, briefed the judges on the Council's achievements since the previous meeting with judges of the Riga Regional Court in 2022, and also provided an update on current issues relating to judicial support staff.

Māris Vīgants, President of the Riga Regional Court, reported that the court had developed a new annual staff appraisal system to boost the motivation of judicial assistants. It ensures objective feedback and promotes professional development, thereby improving the overall efficiency of the courts' work. M. Vīgants called on the

Judicial Council to discuss issues relating to the quality of documents submitted to the courts and the responsibility of lawyers for the documents they prepare on behalf of their clients. Other topical issues were also discussed during the meeting – including the organisation of court work in crisis situations and the issue of the judges' retirement pension scheme. The judges emphasised the need to ensure stable, uninterrupted and predictable judicial proceedings in exceptional circumstances. The importance of service pensions as a key factor in social and financial security was also highlighted, in terms of guaranteeing judicial independence, the attractiveness of the role and the sustainability of the profession.

A. Strupiņš informed the judges about the guidelines drawn up for drafting court judgments, as well as the guidelines for preparing appeals on points of law in all types of proceedings. The aim of the guidelines is to ensure a consistent approach to both the structure of judgements and cassation appeals and the quality of legal reasoning.

Dz. Balta discussed issues relating to the selection of candidates for judicial office with the judges. She emphasised that one of the most common stumbling blocks for candidates is the inability to independently analyse and resolve legal issues, even though this skill is an essential and integral part of a judge's work. To encourage qualified candidates to apply for judicial posts, the Judicial Council has decided to launch a competition on 1 September 2025 for posts of judges at district (city) courts and regional courts, specialising in criminal, civil and administrative cases. Similarly, representatives of the Judicial Candidate Selection Committee are planning visits to courts to inform potential candidates for judicial office – particularly judicial assistants – about the selection process, the assessment criteria and the specific nature of a judge's work.

Senator I. Meldere spoke about the role of the Judicial Qualifications Committee in the career development of judges. She emphasised that, when providing an opinion on the suitability of a district (city) court judge for a post at a regional court, the references prepared by three regional court judges regarding the candidate's previous work are of crucial importance.

Visit to Riga Regional Court, meeting with judges from the Criminal Division



On 15 September 2025, the Chair of the Judicial Council, Aigars Strupiņš, a member of the Judicial Candidate Selection Committee, Senator Sandra Kaija, and representatives of the Judicial Council's Secretariat met with judges from the Criminal Division of the Riga Regional Court to discuss current issues relating to the work of the judicial system and the Judicial Council's operational priorities.

The Chair of the Judicial Council particularly emphasised the problem of attracting young lawyers to the judicial profession. The greatest shortage is observed among specialists in criminal law, who relatively rarely take part in judicial selection competitions. A. Strupiņš cited the insufficient remuneration for the position of judge, compared to that offered by other legal professions, as one of the reasons for this trend.

M. Vīgants, President of the Riga Regional Court, pointed out that it is essential to take into account real trends in the labour market, particularly the need to attract young specialists at the start of their careers following graduation from university. Speaking on the duration of proceedings, he highlighted the problem of lawyers' busy schedules, which often lead to delays in court proceedings. In such cases, the next court hearing can only be scheduled after a considerable delay, which has a negative impact on the progress of court proceedings.

The Judicial Council's dialogue with the Academy of Justice



On 5 March 2025, the Chair of the Judicial Council, Aigars Strupišs, met with the Director of the Academy of Justice, Laila Jurcēna, to discuss the Academy's development plans and issues relating to its operations.

During the meeting, L. Jurcēna provided an update on the launch of the Academy of Justice, the institutional work already carried out, and the measures required to ensure its successful operation. The Director of the Academy emphasised that, since the institution began operations on 1 January 2025, training programmes have been provided for judges and prosecutors in accordance with the training plan approved by the Judicial Council, although the Academy of Justice's premises are not yet available.

Both officials agreed that the Academy of Justice should be established as a unified platform providing support for the high-quality functioning of the courts and the prosecution service to ensure that participants can acquire the necessary knowledge through the training activities, and freely discuss and exchange views on current legal issues. A. Strupišs and L. Jurcēna discussed the strategic objectives and directions of the training, as well as the principles for designing training programmes.

A. Strupišs emphasised that, as part of the Academy of Justice's activities, it is essential to ensure effective feedback between lecturers and the Academy's target audience. This feedback must be integrated into the Academy's day-to-day work to ensure the quality and effectiveness of teaching. Mr Strupišs also emphasised that one of the Academy's most pressing tasks is to provide training for judicial assistants who may wish to become judges, thereby enhancing their qualifications.

The Judicial Council's dialogue with the Office of the Ombudsman



On 30 September 2025, a meeting was held of the Judicial Council's working group tasked with assessing the organisation of court proceedings in cases involving domestic violence and threats to a person's life or health. During the meeting, representatives from the Ombudsman's Office presented the findings of a study carried out in 2023–2024 on the effectiveness of the application of the temporary protection mechanism against violence in the courts during 2021–2022.

The meeting discussed the recommendations set out in the study, including: (1) ways to prevent risks of violence in a timely manner by responding promptly to the facts set out in the application and by making interim decisions or providing information to the relevant authorities – the police, the guardianship court or social services; (2) the need to ensure the urgent examination of applications in cases where they are submitted to the court on a Friday or on a day preceding a public holiday; (3) the development of uniform criteria for the application of interim protective measures, including in cases where, on the court's own initiative, an obligation is imposed to attend social rehabilitation programmes aimed at reducing violent behaviour; (4) improving the exchange of information and refining cooperation mechanisms between the courts and the police in the process of notifying and serving court decisions; (5) informing the public about the nature of interim protection measures and individuals' rights to use them, including the right to request their revocation, as well as the need for the court to respond to cases where an application contains manifestly false information.

At the working group meeting, it was noted that there is still a lack of full public understanding regarding the application of protective measures against domestic violence, and that signs of legal nihilism are evident. Unfortunately, court statistics over several years confirm a consistently high number of applications received for temporary protection against violence.

The study is available [on the Ombudsman's website](http://www.tiesibsargs.lv)
www.tiesibsargs.lv

The Judicial Council's dialogue with the public



The Judicial Council's dialogue with the public is an essential tool for promoting transparency, openness and trust in the legal system. To achieve these objectives, the Judicial Council regularly informs the public through various channels and tools, providing the latest news on its activities and current developments. This approach helps to raise public awareness of the Judicial Council's role and its decisions regarding the development of the judicial system.

In 2025, the Judicial Council actively kept the media informed through press releases, in order to convey information effectively and promptly to the media, the public and other interested parties. The Judicial Council's secretariat issued a total of 62 press releases, mainly providing information on the Council's meetings and the decisions taken.

Meanwhile, over the past year, the Judicial Council was most frequently mentioned in publications by the national news agency LETA (106 articles), the official publisher 'Latvijas Vēstnesis' on the 'LV portāls' platform (94 articles), in publications on the 'Jurista Vārds' portal www.juristavards.lv (91 articles), in the magazine 'Jurista Vārds' (45 articles), as well as on the Latvian Public Media portal www.lsm.lv (13 articles) and on Latvian Radio 1 (15 publications). The Judicial Council also regularly publishes up-to-date information on the social

media site 'X'. In 2025, around 120 posts were published on the Judicial Council's profile. The article that attracted the most public interest was about the decision by the Chair of the Judicial Council to review the conduct of judges in a case in which the Zemgale District Court had lifted a restraining order against the victim.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Membership of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary

The European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ) is an international network for cooperation between European Councils for the Judiciary. The ENCJ's office is based in Brussels. Since 2024, the President of the ENCJ has been Madeleine Mathieu, a representative of the French Judicial Council.

The ENCJ operates through working groups dedicated to specific projects, whose members meet periodically and present their annual work results to the General Assembly.

In 2024–2025, the ENCJ continued to develop several projects: 'Judicial Independence, Accountability and Quality', 'Dialogue Group on the Attractiveness of a Judicial Career' and 'Digital Rule of Law Forum'. Latvia's position in the ENCJ working groups in 2025 was represented by the Chair of the Judicial Council, A. Strupišs (until June 2025), Judicial Council member Madars Plepis, Solvita Harbaceviča, Adviser to the President of the Supreme Court on Council of Justice matters, and Dace Šulmane, Adviser to the Council of Justice Secretariat.



Photograph from the ENCJ archive

From 4 to 6 June, Riga hosted the ENCJ's most significant annual forum – the General Assembly – which concluded with the adoption of the Riga Declaration 'Against Threats to the Rule of Law'. The declaration outlines the response of the ENCJ and its member organisations, as well as institutions representing the judiciary, to the growing threats to the fundamental principles of the rule of law in Europe. It emphasises the need to constantly safeguard judicial independence and to address the challenges posed by pressure from the legislature and the executive, the influence of the media, and the risks arising from the digital environment. Particular emphasis was placed on the role of judicial councils in both preventive and reactive measures, highlighting the importance of public education, judicial transparency and cooperation with other legal professions.

During the Riga Assembly, the Chair of the Judicial Council, A. Strupišs, and the Chair of the High Council of Justice of Ukraine (Вища рада правосуддя), Hryhoriy Usyk (Григорій Усик), met in person. During the talks, an agreement was reached on further strengthening the partnership and developing joint projects, with a particular focus on the exchange of experience among judges and support for reforms of the Ukrainian judicial system on the path towards the European Union.

The results of the European judges' survey on judicial independence, conducted by the ENCJ, were presented at the General Assembly. A total of 19,136 judges from 30 countries took part in the survey. Since 2015, when the first survey was conducted, the average self-assessment of independence in Member States has gradually improved; however, judges point to problems that negatively affect their independence. Some of these relate to the handling of cases, whilst others concern the system as a whole, such as appointments. As noted in the survey report, following many years of unsatisfactory results, a significant improvement in the self-assessment of judicial independence has occurred in Lithuania – from 7.5 in 2022 to 8.3 in 2025 – and in Latvia – from 7.2 in 2019 to 7.8 in 2025. Overall, the level of participation by Latvian judges was commendable – around 40 per cent (a minimum threshold of 20 per cent was required).

ENCJ members have the opportunity to organise remote lunch seminars to discuss current issues in the organisation of judicial work. Several such seminars took place in 2025:

the European Commission's report on the rule of law (*EU Justice Scoreboard*) (September 2025);

Culture of European Judges' Associations (October 2025);

The 'Portrait of a Judge' project (November 2025);

CEELI guidelines on alternative emergency judicial reviews (December 2025);

the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on democratic law-making and (April 2025).

A summary of the European survey on judicial independence is available [on the Judicial Council's website](#).

Report on the Rule of Law in the European Union

In 2025, the European Commission published its thirteenth annual report on the rule of law indicators in the Member States of the European Union (EU Justice Scoreboard). The statistical data describing the functioning of the judicial system in this publication reflect the figures for 2023.

The European Commission's report shows that Latvia has a below-average number of contentious civil and commercial cases received per 100 inhabitants (1.7 cases), which is fewer than in Lithuania (3 cases) but more than in Estonia (1.2 cases).

In terms of the time taken to hear contentious civil and commercial cases across all court instances, Latvia ranks 7th place among the countries with the shortest

case processing times. In terms of the duration of proceedings in administrative cases in the first instance, Latvia ranks 7th place among the countries with the shortest case processing times (processing time of 200 days), whilst Lithuania leads the way at EU level – with cases being processed in approximately 80 days.

The report also assesses the speed with which courts and other relevant institutions handle certain categories of cases. The duration of proceedings in money laundering cases at first instance in Latvia in 2023 (480 days) is above average. The figures are volatile, as in 2022 the duration of proceedings in this category was 180 days. One of the most stable judicial systems in this area is Finland – with a consistently uniform duration (around 250 days) across all the years covered in the report. Particularly long case processing times in Latvia are observed in corruption cases (1 000 days); are 'surpassed' only by France (1 100 days). It should be noted, however, that no data is available for six countries in this review.

The European Commission's 2025 Rule of Law Scoreboard included a specific question on access to justice and adjustments for people at risk of discrimination and older people. Overall, Latvia has successfully adapted both access to justice and the provision and collection of relevant information on groups at risk of discrimination (6 out of 8 criteria are met). Latvia has achieved the maximum number of criteria in the area of ensuring child-friendly court proceedings (alongside the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Denmark, Lithuania, Sweden, Spain, Estonia, Portugal, Germany and Hungary). According to the report, Latvia provides all the legal remedies set out in the EU questionnaire for victims of violence against women and domestic violence: measures have been put in place to protect the rights and interests of victims and witnesses; measures have been put in place to ensure that, where necessary, contact between victims and perpetrators is prevented; victims are informed when the perpetrator is no longer in custody; in cases of violence against women/domestic violence, NGOs and/or equality bodies can provide assistance; a dedicated website providing legal and practical information on violence against women/domestic violence.

When analysing total expenditure on the judicial system as a proportion of GDP, Latvia ranks second (behind Bulgaria). The report compares the remuneration of judicial and prosecutorial assistants with the national average wage. Statistically, the remuneration of judicial assistants in Latvia, compared with other EU countries, is average – around 70 per cent of the average wage (similar to Ireland, the Czech Republic and Belgium). There are several countries where the starting salary for a judicial

assistant is above the national average wage: Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain, Malta and Austria.

An analysis of the latest Eurobarometer surveys on public perceptions of judicial independence reveals slow changes. In Latvian society, the proportion of respondents who have no opinion has increased, whilst the proportion of respondents who view judicial independence positively has decreased (from 43% to 42%). Of particular relevance are the views of businesses, as summarised by Eurobarometer, on the main reasons why, in their view, the protection of investments in the courts is ineffective. Businesses cite frequent changes to legislation and the poor quality of the legislative process as the main obstacles, as well as unpredictable and non-transparent administrative action and difficulties in challenging administrative decisions in court.

The 2025 report on the rule of law in the European Union includes updated information on the institution of judicial recusal (officials responsible for decision-making and appeals), as well as on the officials or institutions responsible for the appointment and dismissal of the Prosecutor-General. A new feature is the self-assessment by EU Member States of the independence of bar associations. Latvia ranks among the 11 countries where barristers meet all the indicators of independence (for example, the body granting authorisation to practise is independent; the executive does not have a supervisory role, etc.).

Report on the implementation of the principle of the rule of law in the European Union

In 2025, the European Commission published its sixth annual Rule of Law Report, which examines current developments in the Member States of the European Union across four areas of the rule of law: the judicial system, the fight against corruption, media freedom and pluralism, as well as broader institutional issues relating to the functioning of the system of checks and balances.

The European Commission independently monitors these areas, tracking Member States' progress in implementing previously issued recommendations and carrying out new reforms.

The report notes that Latvia's judicial system has continued to function effectively. For several years now, the only point of concern in this area has been the need to introduce safeguards to limit political interference in the process of appointing judges to the Supreme Court. The report highlights the establishment of the Academy of Justice as a positive achievement, which took place with

the support of the Commission's Technical Assistance Instrument and following the reform in line with Latvia's Recovery and Resilience Plan.

The report finds that, among both the general public and the business community, perceptions of the level of judicial independence in Latvia are moderately high, with minimal changes compared to 2024, however, compared with 2021, these figures have deteriorated by approximately 10 per cent.

The European Commission, referring to information and documents provided by the Ministry of Justice, the Judicial Council, the State Audit Office and other institutions, has highlighted the following current challenges facing the Latvian judicial system.

- High turnover among judicial assistants, driven by low salaries and a perception of a lack of career progression opportunities within the judiciary, as well as the attractiveness of the private sector;
- Difficulties in filling all judicial vacancies, which the Judicial Council is addressing by discussing this issue with universities and, with the assistance of the Academy of Justice, planning to provide training for some of the judicial candidates;
- Measures relating to the appropriate distribution of workload amongst judges. For example, the recommendation by the Judicial Council's working group to redistribute the workload of judges specialising in land registry cases (creation of a new post of 'court lawyer' within the judiciary);
- In the Court of Economic Affairs, there has been an overall increase in the number of cases and a temporary reduction in the number of active judges.

ACADEMY OF JUSTICE

Progress in the establishment of the Academy of Justice in 2025

On 1 January 2025, an independent and unified professional development institution – the Academy of Justice – commenced operations. It is a state institution under the institutional supervision of the Cabinet of Ministers (the Cabinet of Ministers exercises institutional supervision through the Minister of Justice), whilst the Judicial Council exercises functional supervision over the Academy of Justice.

The Academy of Justice was established through the implementation of the European Union's Recovery Fund investment project 'Establishment of a training centre for the professional development of judges, court staff, prosecutors, assistant prosecutors and specialised investigators (in interdisciplinary matters)' ('the Project'), and the Court Administration is responsible for the management of the Project and its finances.

In accordance with the terms of the Project, oversight of the reform's implementation is carried out by the Ministry of Justice in cooperation with the Judicial Council. The reform is implemented by the Court Administration in cooperation with the Office of the Prosecutor-General, the Supreme Court and the Ministry of the Interior. Funding for the project will be available until June 2026. From 2025, the Academy of Justice will be partially funded from the state budget. Following the conclusion of the project on 1 July 2026, the Academy of Justice will continue to organise training activities and improve the efficiency of the judicial system using funds from the state budget.

The remit of the Academy of Justice is governed by the Academy of Justice Act, which sets out the legal basis and framework for the institution's operations, as well as its place and appropriate status within the system of state and judicial institutions. The Academy of Justice will commence operations in stages, starting in 2025.

Establishment of the Academy of Justice

At its meeting on 18 February 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers appointed Dr Laila Jurcēna to the post of Director of the Academy of Justice. Dr L. Jurcēna was nominated for this post by the Minister for Justice, Inese Lībiņa-Egnere, and her appointment was supported by the Judicial Council. Until the Director of the Academy of Justice was confirmed in post, the duties of the Director of the Academy of Justice were carried out by Mihails Papsujevičs, State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice.

One of the first tasks of the Academy of Justice, a newly established institution, was to recruit administrative staff and to continue drafting the regulatory acts necessary for the institution's operation.



The Development Department of the Court Administration – the 'Academy of Justice' project

- Project manager and deputies
- Life-long education experts
- Project coordinators

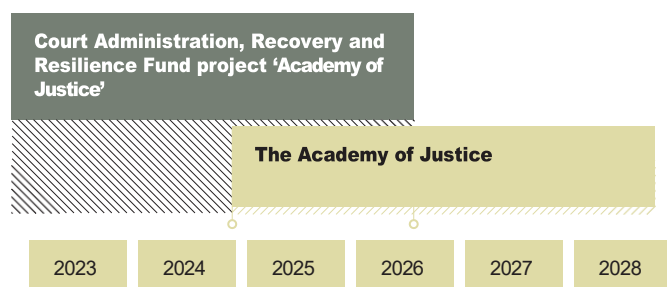
Staff of the Academy of Justice

- Director
- Director of the Administrative Department
- Administrator
- Finance Officer

The official opening ceremony of the Academy of Justice took place on 17 October 2025, attended by the President of the Supreme Court, the current Minister for Justice and the former Minister for Justice, a Judge of the Court of Justice of the European Union, representatives of the Judicial Council, as well as the presidents of all courts, senior public prosecutors and representatives of the self-governing bodies of the courts and public prosecution service.

The role of the Academy of Justice, as the provider of professional continuing education, is to ensure that professionals within the judiciary have the opportunity to maintain and develop the knowledge and skills relevant to their direct professional duties, by organising training and support activities that promote the development of the judiciary, fostering a culture of learning as part of professional responsibility and thereby enhancing public confidence in the judiciary. The Academy of Justice is not a higher education institution. It is an institution that provides judicial officials and staff with the opportunity to develop and refine the knowledge and skills necessary for the performance of their duties.

As the Project continues, training for the Academy of Justice's target groups will be provided by the Court Administration in collaboration with the Academy of Justice until 30 June 2026.



Implementation of study programmes

Ten training programmes have been developed to deliver the training. These programmes are based on long-term development plans, the requirements set out in policy planning documents, and the needs expressed by the target groups themselves. The programmes cover professional development in both initial training and continuing professional development, and provide a framework for the development of the annual training plan.

Professional development training programmes provide an opportunity to develop daily training provision in a well-considered manner over the long term. Specifically, the training plan for judges, court staff, prosecutors and assistant prosecutors for 2025 ('the Plan'), which was approved by the Judicial Council on 18 October 2024, was drawn up taking into account the training needs expressed by the target groups for the coming year, the recommendations set out in policy planning documents, and the additions suggested by the Ministry of Justice, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judges' self-governing bodies. The Plan follows a unified approach to the provision of training for various target groups and also provides for the possibility for judges and prosecutors to participate in joint training sessions. In drawing up the Plan, account has been taken of the competences and training needs identified during the development of professional development training programmes for court staff.

Since 2023, various training activities have been provided to the target audience as part of a pilot scheme. Training on legal topics is led by the most experienced representatives of the courts and the Public Prosecutor's Office, who thereby share the skills and knowledge they have gained through their work. Public procurement procedures are organised to deliver training that requires the involvement of experts from other sectors.

As part of the implementation of the training programmes, 326 training events took place in 2025, attended by 8,309 participants. The highest number of training events took place in October – 89 events attended by 1,690 participants – and in December – 45 events attended by 2,085 participants. A total of 38 training records were made during the year.

On 15 May 2025, the Project's Supervisory Board updated the Project's professional development programmes, supplementing them with the European Judicial Training Network's (*EJTN*) programmes for the exchange of experience and study visits, which provide judges, prosecutors, court staff and assistant prosecutors the opportunity to compare judicial and prosecutorial practices across different countries, deepen their understanding of the application of European Union and the functioning of EU institutions, as well as to foster cooperation between colleagues across Europe and even beyond, where exchange opportunities so permit. The programme descriptions include recommendations regarding the target audience's ability to attend training events primarily intended for a different target audience, and emphasise the importance of the learning environment as a facilitating factor, as well as the possibility of repeated participation, where necessary to update knowledge and in line with the current context.

Overall, in 2025, a comprehensive and targeted set of training activities was implemented for judicial system staff, judges, prosecutors and their assistants, covering both the deepening of professional knowledge and skills and the development of horizontal competences. The training content included methodologies for case examination and decision-making, critical thinking and legal argumentation, issues relating to administrative and civil proceedings, issues relating to the application of criminal law, the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, the legal aspects of sanctions, as well as the use of artificial intelligence in the day-to-day work of judges and court staff. The training was delivered both in person and online, ensuring a flexible approach for different target groups and promoting the application of uniform professional standards across the entire judicial system.

At the same time, significant attention was paid to developing personal effectiveness, communication and change management skills. Seminars on time management, work-life balance, critical thinking, leadership, argumentation, negotiation and media literacy strengthened participants' ability to organise their work in a structured manner, make high-quality decisions and communicate professionally in both internal and external contexts.

Measures to promote well-being and prevent stress and burnout also played a significant role, including mindfulness training, supervision and coaching for judicial system staff. These measures promoted an understanding of the impact of emotional strain on the quality of work, strengthened staff's psychological resilience and helped them maintain a professional balance in high-intensity working conditions. Overall, the training programmes implemented made a significant contribution to strengthening the efficiency, sustainability and public trust in the judicial system, ensuring adherence to high professional standards and the ability to adapt to contemporary challenges.

Of particular note is the ability to respond to the judicial system's immediate training needs. Given today's complex geopolitical situation and national security challenges, in order to ensure that judges can fully handle cases that may directly or indirectly affect national security, in May 2025, the project, in collaboration with the Academy of Justice, organised a major conference entitled 'The Judiciary at the Crossroads of Geopolitical Change — Challenges and Responsibilities in Strengthening National Security'.

The training covered the following topics:

- the impact of geopolitical processes on national security and democracy;
- tactics employed by foreign interests to exert influence in Latvia;
- the national security dimension in judicial practice and decisions.

The Academy of Justice's premises

On 20 May 2025, a certificate was received from the State Construction Control Office regarding the acceptance into service of the reconstruction of the administrative building at 31 11 November Embankment, Riga. By 30 June 2025, the fitting out and equipping of the premises had been carried out using project funds. On 1 July 2025, the adapted premises at 31 11 November Embankment and the equipment were handed over to the Academy of Justice. Until 1 July 2025, the Academy of Justice was temporarily located at 4 Pils Square, Riga; from 1 July 2025, the Academy of Justice has been situated at 31 11 November Embankment.

The teaching rooms are situated on the fourth and fifth floors of the building, and partly on the third floor as well. The refurbishment work has resulted in a modern and

contemporary learning environment, ensuring the energy efficiency and sustainability of the premises. The staff offices are on the third floor of the Academy of Justice, whilst the teaching rooms are on the fourth and fifth floors. The large lecture auditorium (capacity up to 100 people) is equipped with state-of-the-art audio and video technology, ensuring high-quality sound and image for teaching, conferences and seminars of various sizes.

The lecture auditorium (capacity up to 40 people) offers a technologically equipped environment for classes and practical work in smaller groups.



Photograph: Atis Tiltiņš

The computer lab, with 16 workstations, allows students to comfortably develop digital skills and work with specialised software under the guidance of a lecturer, whilst the four group work rooms are suitable for teamwork and discussions.



Photograph: Atis Tiltiņš

The mock trial room is specially adapted for court hearing simulations, providing the opportunity to gain practical experience of procedural aspects in a realistic environment.



Photograph: Atis Tiltiņš

Particularly noteworthy is the library, which, by combining functionality and comfort, is a multifunctional and space suitable for both day-to-day work and the organisation of formal events. It offers the opportunity to host high-level receptions for up to 25 people in a professional and welcoming atmosphere. The space features a relaxation and work area designed to create a peaceful, quiet and productive environment. Here, visitors can work, concentrate on individual tasks or simply relax whilst reading the literature available at the Academy of Justice.



Photograph: Atis Tiltiņš

Academy staff are provided with functional and ergonomically designed office spaces, ensuring a comfortable, technologically equipped and professional environment for day-to-day work.

The modern technological infrastructure and practical layout of the premises make the Academy's facilities suitable for both local and international events, ensuring a pleasant and efficient environment for event participants and staff.

PRIORITIES OF THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL FOR YEAR 2026

In order to achieve the objectives and implement the tasks set out in the Judicial Council's Operational Strategy for 2026–2030, the Judicial Council has identified the following priority areas of action for 2026:

- to finalise the project on organisational reforms of the judicial system – in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, to draw up proposals for amendments to the Law on Judicial Power and to support the further progress of the draft law in the Saeima;
- to promote the recruitment of legally qualified staff to work within the judicial system by improving job standards and remuneration policies for support staff in the judicial system;
- to carry out an assessment of the distribution of judges' workloads in regional courts of general jurisdiction, and to prepare proposals for possible solutions to balance judges' workloads;
- to carry out an assessment of the distribution of judges' workloads in courts of first instance of general jurisdiction, and to prepare proposals for possible solutions to balance judges' workloads;
- to find solutions for improving the organisation of work in the courts in order to optimise the use of judicial resources and to improve the processes for managing case processing times in the courts.



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