

# Court user surveys provide an objective and meaningful assessment of court work

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In order to obtain a comprehensive and well-grounded vision of the evaluation of the work of the courts, it is necessary to purposefully reach an audience that has actually experienced the work of the courts and can provide an objective and meaningful evaluation. This is evidenced by the pilot projects carried out by the public policy centre Providus in Latvian courts, the results and conclusions of which the researchers have presented to the Judicial Council.

In the pilot studies started by Providus in 2019–2020, two types of surveys were carried out, namely a survey of court visitors, which took place in Riga District Court and Riga Regional Court, as well as a survey of legal specialists on the website [manas.tiesas.lv](https://manas.tiesas.lv).

The survey of court visitors demonstrated that the overall level of visitor satisfaction with court work has been high; the average score is 4.4 out of 5. 86% of the evaluated aspects of court work have received ratings of 4 and 5.

These values are relatively much higher than the assessment of Latvian courts in public opinion polls carried out by the research centre SKDS, which also survey respondents who have not personally encountered court work.

In addition, by finding out the opinion of actual court users, it is possible not only to more objectively assess the level of satisfaction of court visitors with the work of courts, but also to find out the opinion of the participants to proceedings on the quality of specific court proceedings.

In turn, the survey of legal specialists (lawyers, advocates, prosecutors) provides an opportunity to find out the opinion of lawyers directly involved in court proceedings both on the quality of court rulings and on the needs of the legal field, for example, on which issues it would be useful to summarize case law.

The Judicial Council acknowledged that both surveys developed within the pilot projects are valuable, as the addressees, court users and specialists in the field of justice, are addressed in a targeted manner. A meaningful result has been achieved, which allows both the chairs of the courts, the Judicial Council, the Ministry of Justice and the Court Administration to learn about the needs of court users and to understand the challenges faced by courts.

As these have only been pilot studies in individual courts, the results cannot represent the situation of all courts. However, the methodology developed therein, where purposeful surveys and analysis of results are carried out, would be useful for conducting research in the whole territory of Latvia in the future. The Judicial Council welcomes the work of the researchers and recommends for the Court Administration to continue to study the work of the courts, both by surveying court users when courts will resume their on-site work and by surveying specialists in electronic form.

Information prepared by

Rasma Zvejniece, the Head of the Division of Communication of the Supreme Court

E-mail: [rasma.zvejniece@at.gov.lv](mailto:rasma.zvejniece@at.gov.lv), telephone: [+371 67020396](tel:+37167020396), [+371 28652211](tel:+37128652211)

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