

# Improving judicial efficiency and budgeting in Latvia

TSIC-RoC-26576 REFORM/2021/OP/0006 Lot 1

## Deliverable 4:

Recommendations for institutional reforms to increase the efficiency of the justice system and promote more efficient use of budgetary resources

05.09.2025

**Technical Support Instrument**

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**Reform and Investment Task Force**  
+32 2 299 11 11 (Commission switchboard)  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 170 / Wetstraat 170  
1049 Brussels, Belgium

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## Abbreviations and their explanations

Abbreviation	Explanation	Abbreviation	Explanation
<b>Eng.</b>	English	<b>PwC</b>	"PricewaterhouseCoopers Ltd"
<b>CEPEJ</b>	Council of Europe Commission for the Efficiency of Justice. Council of Europe European Commission for the efficiency of justice)	<b>SG REFORM</b>	European Commission Reform and Investment Task Force
<b>e-case</b>	A set of information and communication technologies that ensure the implementation of criminal proceedings, administrative offence proceedings, administrative proceedings, civil proceedings, proceedings for the application of coercive measures of an educational nature to children and the process of enforcement of a decision and the availability of data to be processed in the proceedings in an electronic environment	<b>TSI</b>	Technical Support Instrument
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>TIS</b>	Court information system
<b>ICT</b>	Information and communication technologies		
<b>IT</b>	Information technology		

# Roadmap for institutional reform

## Goal



Independent and modern judicial administrative management adapted to the needs of judicial proceedings.

## The result of the reforms



A hierarchically subordinate court administration model under the Judicial Council ensuring the continuous improvement of the organisation of the judicial system's operations

## Basic principles of Court Administration



Focus on effectiveness of the court



Cooperation and transparency



One management center: the Judicial Council

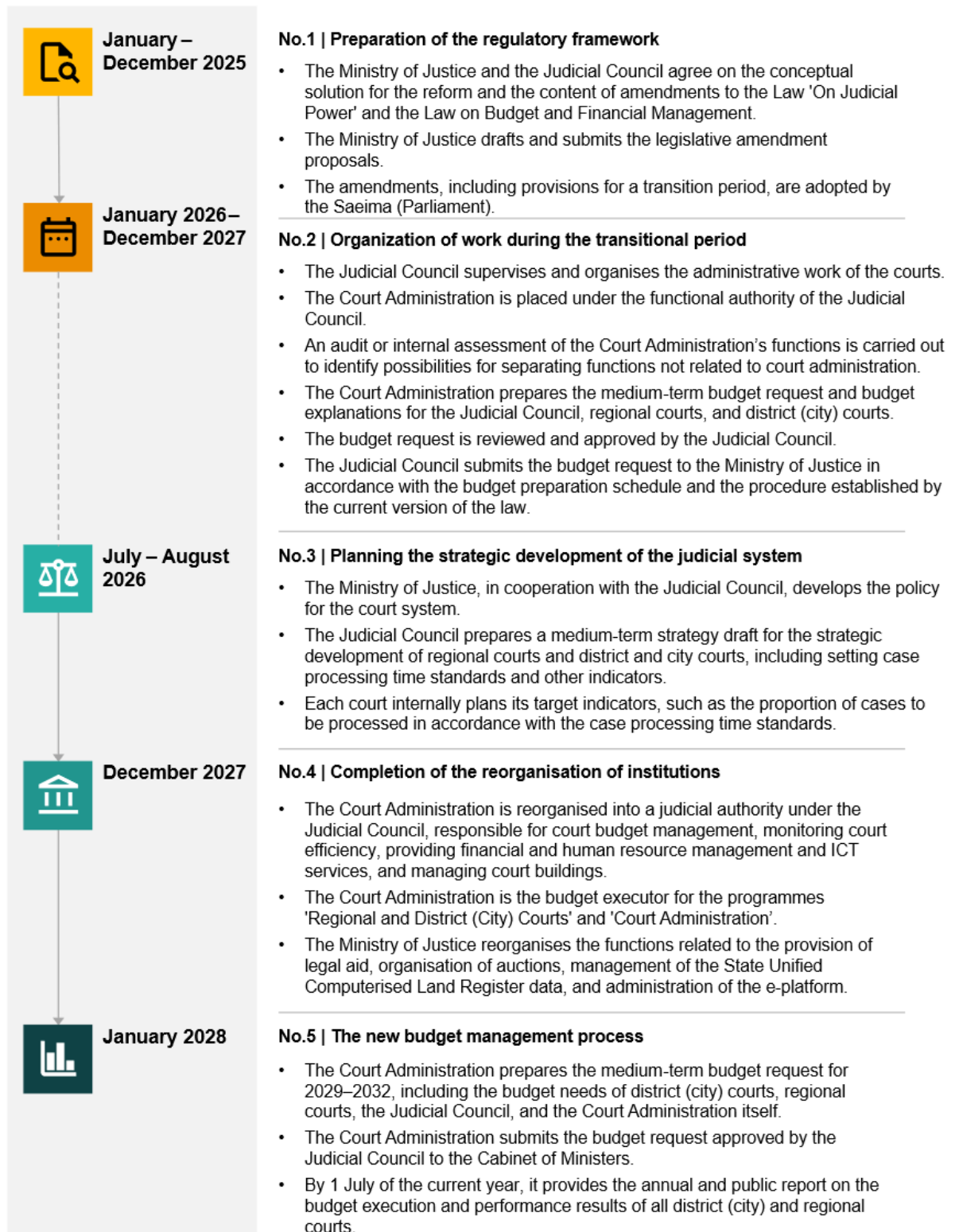


Aligned objectives and performance results

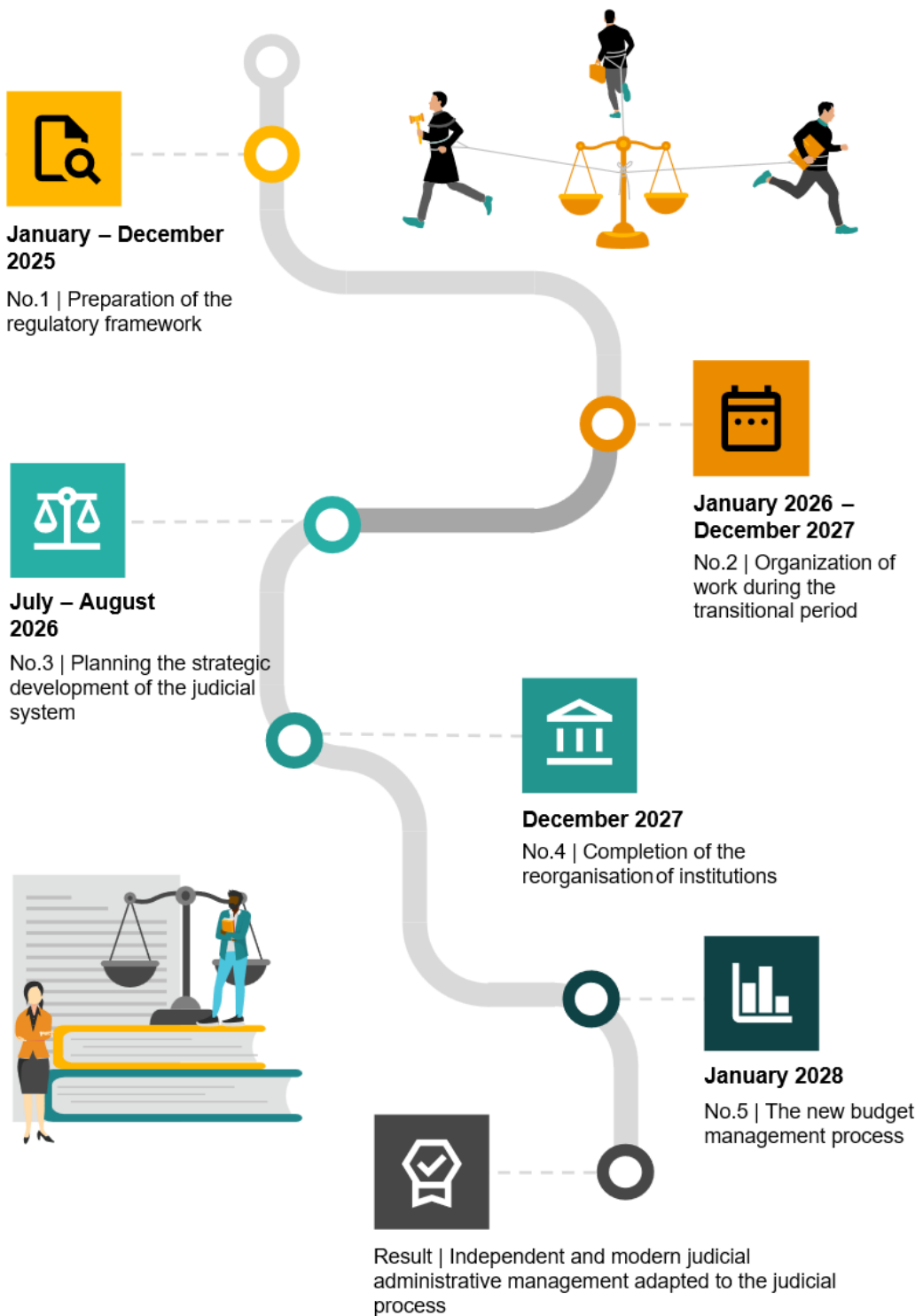
## The institutional organisation of the administrative management of the courts in the future

Courts	Judicial Council	Court Administration	Strategic coherence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District (city) courts and regional courts are the clients of judicial administrative management services, defining the types of services and monitoring their quality.</li> <li>The courts nominate representatives to the Judicial Council.</li> <li>At least two-thirds of the composition of the Council shall consist of representatives delegated by judges and one third by other specialists competent in the field of court management.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manages and coordinates the administration of the courts.</li> <li>Approves the regulations and structure of the Court Administration.</li> <li>Appoints and dismisses the Director of the Court Administration.</li> <li>Defines the principles of work organisation and cooperation between the courts and the Court Administration.</li> <li>In cooperation with court presidents, develops a unified development strategy for the court system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Court Administration is a judicial institution that ensures the necessary conditions for conducting legal proceedings in courts and provides services to the courts and the Judicial Council.</li> <li>Prepares and submits for approval the budget request for district (city) courts and regional courts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Judicial Council, develops the policy for the court system.</li> <li>The organisation of work and budget management of the court system is consolidated with the court performance management system.</li> <li>The goals of the court system are aligned with the performance outcomes of each court institution.</li> </ul>

## Timeline for judicial administrative administration reforms



## Timeline for judicial administrative administration reforms



## Summary

The aim of this report is to support the Council for the Judiciary in planning reforms of the judiciary that would contribute to increasing the efficiency of the functioning of the justice system. The report describes the objectives of judicial reforms, the expected results and the necessary steps (regulatory, institutional, organisational changes) to achieve results.

We are grateful that the drafting of this report was supported by the highest judicial and executive officials – the Judicial Council, in particular its President Aigars Strupiņš and Vice-President Ilze Celmiņa, Deputy State Secretary for Justice at the Ministry of Justice Inita Ilgaža and her colleagues, as well as the Director of Court Administration Andris Munda and many other specialists. The report draws on recommendations and summarises the conclusions of a survey of judges and court staff conducted by PwC in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Council for the Judiciary in March 2025.

As a result of the discussions, the following objectives of judicial reform have been formulated:

- Establish judicial self-government in budgetary and job assurance matters so that the organisation of the judicial system contributes to increasing the efficiency of the courts and achieving the fiscal independence of the courts as a constitutional organ.
- Establish a model of judicial human resource management and work organisation that promotes effective cooperation between judges and court staff in order to achieve maximum results in the judicial process with optimal resources.

In pursuit of the objectives set, it is necessary to:

- firstly, implement reforms of the institutions responsible for ensuring the work of the judiciary,
- secondly, introduce changes to the judicial budget management process,
- thirdly, implement reforms in the area of human resource planning and management.

### 1. Reforms of the bodies responsible for ensuring the work of the courts.

**Objective:** To establish an independent and modern administrative management of the courts adapted to the needs of the judicial process.

**The result of the reforms:** the Judicial Council has a hierarchically subordinated model of court administration, which contributes to the continuous improvement of the organisation of the work of the judicial system.

Determine that

- 1.1. The Council for the Judiciary supervises and organises the administrative work of the courts.
- 1.2. The Court Administration is a judicial institution whose purpose is to provide the necessary conditions for conducting proceedings in the courts and to provide services to the courts and the Council for the Judiciary.
- 1.3. Council for the Judiciary
  - 1.3.1. approve the by-laws and structure of the Court Administration;
  - 1.3.2. appoint and dismiss the Director of the Court Administration;
  - 1.3.3. lays down the principles of the organisation of the work of the courts and the Court Administration and mutual cooperation.

- 1.4. The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Council for the Judiciary, develops the policy of the judicial system.
- 1.5. The Council for the Judiciary, in cooperation with the presidents of the courts, draws up a common strategy for the development of the justice system.

## **2. Changes in the judicial budget management process.**

**Objective:** To effectively ensure and demonstrate to the public that the judicial system is free from the political influence of the executive and acts responsibly with the state budget funds entrusted to it.

**Result:** The influence of the executive, whose decisions are subject to judicial control, on the judiciary's budget is excluded and the accountability of the judicial system is ensured.

### **Stage 1 (transitional period). Semi-independent budget management of the judiciary until 2028.**

- 2.1. Determine the functional subordination of the Court Administration to the Council for the Judiciary and institutional subordination to the Ministry of Justice;
- 2.2. Provide that the Court Administration prepares draft budget requests for district (city) courts and regional courts, approved by the Council for the Judiciary.
- 2.3. The Court Administration shall submit the budget request approved by the Council for the Judiciary to the Ministry of Justice.
- 2.4. The Ministry of Justice, attaching an opinion of the Ministry of Justice on budget requests for district (city) courts and regional courts, submits them to the Ministry of Finance.

### **Phase 2: Independent self-government of the judiciary and budgetary management of the judiciary led by the Council for the Judiciary from 2028 onwards or from the moment when the status of the Court Administration as an independent judicial body overseen by the Council for the Judiciary has been established.**

- 2.5. To determine that the activities of district (city) courts and regional courts, the Council of the Judiciary and the Court Administration shall be financed from the State budget in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Law on Budget and Financial Management.
- 2.6. In order to ensure a competent process of budgetary management of district (city) courts and regional courts and to prevent the self-isolation of the courts, change the composition of the Council for the Judiciary so that two-thirds of the members of the Council for the Judiciary are judges, one third are decision-making and executive officials, and representatives of the public who are competent for budgetary and financial management matters. All members of the Judicial Council have the status of public officials.
- 2.7. The Court Administration shall prepare, submit and ensure public access to the reports specified in law.
- 2.8. By 30 April of the current year, the Court Administration shall submit information to the relevant committees of the Saeima regarding the objectives and results of the activities of the district (city) courts and regional courts, the Judicial Council and the Court Administration, the implementation of the budget of the previous year, the results achieved according to the resources used, the benefit to society and the impact on the further financing of the judicial system in the medium term.

2.9. Each year, in the annex to the report on the implementation of the budget, the Court Administration

2.9.1. include information on the performance results of the reporting year and the achievement or degree of fulfilment of the goals set out in the development strategy during the reporting period;

2.9.2. provide information on the performance results of district (city) courts and regional courts achieved with the financial resources allocated for the reporting period (compare the value of the planned indicators with the actual performance of the indicator, indicating the deviation from the planned value (in percent) and the reasons for non-performance of the indicator, and indicate the interpretation of the planned indicator, as well as the assessment of cost-effectiveness);

2.9.3. Includes information on the implementation of the performance indicators specified in the explanatory notes to the State Budget Law during the reporting period.

2.10. Court presidents, with the support of the Court Administration, develop a court strategy and determine the performance indicators of the court, plan their achievement with the financial resources allocated for the reporting period. By January 15 of the current year, the president of the court shall submit to the Judicial Council information on the objectives and results of the activities of district (city) courts and regional courts, compare the value of the planned indicators with the actual performance of the indicator, indicating the deviation from the planned value (in percent) and the reasons for the non-fulfilment of the indicator.

### **3. Judicial human resource management reforms.**

**Objective:** To create a human resource management model that allows to improve the efficiency of the judicial process and increase the performance of the courts.

**Result of the reforms:** The Court's human resource management model contributes to a continuous improvement in the organisation of the work of the judicial system.

3.1. Review the basic principles of the human resource management policy of the judicial system.




3.1.1. Transfer responsibility for the organization of judicial work from the executive to the judiciary.

3.1.2. To distinguish between the types of positions of an assistant judge depending on the amount of responsibility assigned to the assistant judge and the qualification requirements imposed on the assistant judge.

3.1.3. Increase the performance of court staff by centralizing the functions of court staff.

# 1. Objective of the project and expected results

## 1.1. The aim of the project and the result to be achieved

General purpose of the service contract	
	Promote institutional, administrative and growth-enhancing structural reforms in Latvia in accordance with Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/240 establishing a Technical Support Instrument (TSI Regulation).
Specific purpose of the service contract	
	To help national authorities improve their ability to plan, amend, implement and review reforms in accordance with Article 4 of the TSI Regulation.
Project results <sup>1</sup>	
	<b>Result 1: Development of a roadmap</b> for the institutional reforms necessary to increase the efficiency of the functioning of the justice system.
	<b>Result No.2:</b> Development and adaptation of a model (methodology) for evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the judicial system based on statistical data.

The achievement of results and the promotion of the long-term impact of this Agreement largely depend on the specific further measures taken by Latvia and the implementation and continued execution of the intended outcomes, as well as on broader policy conditions that are not within the competence of the European Commission and the contracting entity. Such supervision and implementation is exclusively within the competence of Latvia.

## 1.2. Objectives of delivery and tasks to be performed

The aim of the fourth chapter of the project "Recommendations for institutional reforms to enhance the efficiency of the functioning of the justice system and the use of budgetary resources" and the tasks to be carried out within the framework of the report derive from the technical specification of the procurement, which is an integral part of the contract between the European Commission's SG REFORM and PwC.

The strategy of the Judicial Council for 2021-2025 envisages taking over the administrative management of the Latvian justice system. This also includes the development of a model for weighing cases and assessing the effectiveness of the judiciary, which is an essential prerequisite for any future institutional reforms.

The institutional reforms currently being worked on by the Council for the Judiciary aim to promote the efficiency of the functioning of the judiciary by ensuring prompt and fair handling of cases in accordance with public demand, as well as responsible use of state budget funds.

The planned reform is based on the determination of the optimal number of judges in the country, as well as the optimal distribution of judges among judicial institutions, taking into account geographical, demographic and institutional factors of Latvia.

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<sup>1</sup> The achievement of the goal is not only the responsibility of the contractor and will partly depend on the actions of Latvia. It is expected that Latvia, having been closely involved in the implementation of the contract and having consulted with the contracting authority on all delivery projects, will approve the deliverables with the help of its internal mechanisms and implement the work included in the final deliverables.

## Purpose of the report



To support the Council for the Judiciary in its work on judicial reform, **describing the objectives and expected results and the necessary steps** (legislative, institutional, organisational changes) to achieve results.

## Tasks to be carried out in the preparation of the report

### Tasks:

- 1) Prepare a roadmap for reforms in the administrative management of the judiciary, which includes:
  - Evaluation of draft project proposals and policy documents on reform aimed at strengthening the role of the Council for the Judiciary;
  - A proposal for possible changes to the institutional structures of the courts, with the aim of ensuring an optimal number of judges in each court;
  - Cost-benefit analysis of the impact of changing the status of assistant judges (planning of human resources and allocation of responsibilities);
  - Recommendations for a legislative/institutional solution to ensure that the judiciary budget is calculated on the basis of actual trends and societal needs;
  - Recommendations on how to optimise existing internal and legal procedures/IT solutions/HR investments to facilitate a more efficient functioning of the justice system on a day-to-day basis.
- 2) Organise a workshop with the beneficiary, SG REFORM and relevant stakeholders to discuss the roadmap for institutional reform.

## 1.3. Our approach

This is the 4th instalment of the project, the content of which is based on the analytical work carried out in the past

- 1) Initial analysis:
  - a. An introductory report outlining the main project activities and the methodology used.
  - b. Analytical report analysing the current situation, studying good practice and comparative analysis.
- 2) Analysis of the information obtained from interviews and workshops, which complements and clarifies the above analysis in order to prepare, in cooperation with stakeholders, a transition plan from the current situation to the desired future situation.

Recommendations for institutional reforms to enhance the efficiency of the functioning of the justice system and the use of budgetary resources have been developed by assessing the current situation in accordance with the criteria set out in the terms of reference and listed in the Judicial Efficiency of the Commission of Europe (CEPEJ) in the judicial time management tools<sup>2</sup>, in particular the updated Saturn Guidelines for Judicial Time Management<sup>3</sup>. The recommendations have been developed taking into account the Latvian practices identified in the previous report, as well as best practices in other countries. The following research methods have been used to conduct the study and prepare the report:

<sup>2</sup> CEPEJ. CEPEJ tools on judicial time management. Available: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cepej/saturn-tools>.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ). Revised SATURN Guidelines for Judicial Time Management. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/cepej-2021-13-en-revised-saturn-guidelines-4th-revision/1680a4cf81>.

1. table. An overview of the methods used in the preparation of the report.

Method	Description
<b>Literature study</b>	Compilation and systematic analysis of documents (analysis of secondary data, including publicly available documents and data, regulatory framework, PwC knowledge database) by performing analysis of Latvian and foreign practice.
<b>Interviews</b>	Interviews with individual stakeholders were organised as an integral part of the information gathering process under Deliverable 3 in order to identify the current system and the necessary improvements. The method was used to obtain additional information for the assessment of foreign and Latvian practice. The recommendations developed are based on the insights expressed in the interviews.
<b>Analysis of statistical data</b>	The analysis of descriptive statistics covered the acquisition, compilation, grouping and graphical representation of data, focusing on the calculation of basic statistical indicators and the identification of the internal structure and characteristics of the data set. The analysis uses data from the official statistical databases of the European Union (EU) and Latvia, as well as data provided by the Council of Justice and the Court Administration.
<b>Discussions (workshops)</b>	Discussions with representatives of wider stakeholder groups in order to prepare, in cooperation with stakeholders, the planning of transitions from the current to the desired future scenario on the basis of an examination of the current situation regarding the budgetary and human resource planning of the judiciary. The discussions took place on 19 and 21 January 2025, 21 and 28 May.
<b>Case study</b>	Case studies were used to gain the best possible understanding of foreign good practices by looking for answers to the questions "how?", "in what way?" and "why?". In line with the Good Practice Review carried out under Deliverable 3, which selected three countries: Estonia, the Netherlands and Finland, the recommendations have been developed taking into account the identified good practices, in particular in the area of judicial budgetary management.

The report was prepared using the project-adapted PwC **Transform** methodology, which is further described in Deliverable 3.

## 2. Reforms of the bodies responsible for ensuring the work of the courts

### 2.1. The need for reforms

#### 1) There is no effective judicial self-government in Latvia in matters of budget and work organisation and provision which negatively affects the independence of the courts and the efficiency of the functioning of the courts

The originally conceived model of judicial self-government has not been implemented and there has been a departure from the move towards judicial self-determination in administrative matters. The Ministry of Justice remains the leading public administration in the administration of justice.<sup>4</sup> As Veronika Krūmiņa points out in her comments on the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia<sup>5</sup>: "after the restoration of Latvia's independence, one of the largest conflicts between the judiciary and the executive is related directly to the organizational management of the courts."<sup>6</sup>

The Concept of Judicial Administration (hereinafter referred to as the Concept), adopted as early as 2003, provided<sup>7</sup> that from 1 January 2005 the Council for the Judiciary would become an independent body defined in the Constitution representing the judiciary. It was planned that the Judicial Administration would pass under the subordination of the Council for the Judiciary.

The solutions contained in the concept have been implemented only partially: both the Council for the Judiciary and the Court Administration were created, which took over from the Ministry of Justice the main function of ensuring the work of the courts, but the Court Administration was not subordinated to the Council for the Judiciary. The Council for the Judiciary is not designated as a separate body to be able to handle financial resources within its competence. Consequently, the Concept's objective of establishing an independent judicial self-government was not achieved. The issue identified in the Concept paper – that Latvian courts remain highly dependent on the executive – has been resolved only partially.

Cabinet Order No. 547 of 2003 stipulated that the transition to judicial self-government is carried out gradually in the following stages:

Stages of implementation of the concept	Due date	Comments on execution
<b>Stage 1.</b> The reorganisation of the Ministry of Justice and the establishment of the Court Administration as an institution subordinate to the Ministry of Justice are taking place.	From 1 January 2004	Completed on schedule <sup>8</sup>
<b>Stage 2.</b> The Court Administration takes over (authors' note from the Ministry of Justice) the main functions of ensuring the work of the courts	From 1 April 2004	In part, because the Ministry of Justice has retained the status of the leading state administration in the administration of courts <sup>9</sup>
<b>Stage 3.</b> A coordinating body for the provision of judicial work and the Court Administration is established - Council for the Judiciary	From 1 May 2004	03.06.2010. in the version of the Law that comes into force on 01.08.2010, changing the planned composition of the Council for the Judiciary

<sup>4</sup> Section 107, Paragraph one of the Law "On the Judiciary".

<sup>5</sup> At the time of writing, Senator of the Supreme Court

<sup>6</sup> Veronika Krūmiņa. Comments on the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia. Chapter VI. Court. 10. Judicial Administration.

<sup>7</sup> Cabinet Order No. 547 of 28 August 2003 "On the Concept of Court Administration" Available at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/78433-par-tiesu-administracijas-koncepciju>. By Cabinet Order No. 397 of 8 July 2008

"On the recognition of cabinet order No. 547 of 28 August 2003, On the Concept of Court Administration", as invalid, the concept ceased to be valid.

<sup>8</sup> Cabinet Regulation No. 720 of 16 December 2003 "By-laws of the Court Administration"

<sup>9</sup> Section 107, Paragraph one of the Law "On the Judiciary".

<b>Stage 4.</b> The Council for the Judiciary becomes an independent <a href="#">body defined in the Constitution</a> that represents and manages the judiciary. The Court Administration is subordinate to the Council for the Judiciary	From 1 January 2005	Not executed
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As a result, the problems listed in the Concept have not been completely solved<sup>10</sup>:

- (courts) subordinate to and dependent on the executive in all matters, including funding and administrative support;
- In Latvia, there is still an understanding of the judiciary as a public sector that must be directed, managed and monitored, which has hindered the development of an understanding of the court as a separate, independent and equal branch of state power.

Justifying that the solutions proposed in the Concept should be implemented in stages, the Concept states that: "In view of the current public distrust of the judicial system, the long-term low prestige of the judicial profession linked to inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions and poor technical support, there are concerns that the granting of very rapid and complete independence may lead to excessive seclusion of the judicial self-government, as well as resistance to change and accountability. This has also been pointed out by EU experts<sup>11</sup>. In addition, initially, the realisation of the goal would require much higher budget expenditures."

Consequently, it must be concluded that a prerequisite for the judiciary to acquire the right to self-determination in matters of financing and organisation of work is the readiness of the judiciary to ensure responsible handling of budgetary resources, their efficient and economical use in accordance with the intended objectives.

## **2) Over time, the focus of the competence of the Court Administration and, to some extent, of the Council for the Judiciary on ensuring the work of the courts has been lost**

Contrary to what is planned, the competence of the Court Administration and, to some extent, the Judicial Council has been supplemented by tasks that are outside the scope of ensuring the work of district (city) courts and regional courts.

In contrast to the original concept, which envisaged that the Court Administration would take over the functions related to the organisation and provision of the administrative work of the courts, over time the competence of the Court Administration has been expanded. As of 1 January 2024,<sup>12</sup> the Court Administration is entrusted with the management of the funds earmarked for legal aid. The merger was justified with the aim of making the functioning of public administrations more efficient<sup>13</sup>. With the expansion of the range of functions of the Judicial Administration, its subordination to the Council for the Judiciary becomes virtually impossible.

The functions of the Council for the Judiciary, such as giving an opinion on candidates for the position of officials of the highest judicial authority and nominating candidates for the post of Attorney General, are outside the scope of ensuring the work of district (city) courts and regional courts. The composition of the Council for the Judiciary has also been expanded compared to that decided in the Concept of Judicial Administration, with members who,

<sup>10</sup> The concept of court administration. Available in: <https://polsis.mk.gov.lv/documents/845>

<sup>11</sup> The source mentioned in the concept: Open Society Institute. Pre-accession monitoring report: Judicial capacity, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Cabinet Order No. 434 of 14 July 2023 "On the Administration of Legal Aid".

<sup>13</sup> Annotation of the draft legal act "Amendments to Cabinet Regulation No. 585 of 20 September 2022, By-laws of the Court Administration". Available in: <https://tapportals.mk.gov.lv/annotation/1aa333fc-7b8a-4ee5-beef-9994a323b5f9>

although related to the justice system, are not directly related to the functioning of the courts, the organisation of which should be carried out by the Council (see Annex 2).

These processes require a separation of judicial functions from other functions not related to the administration of courts, which is currently being used as an argument for postponing the necessary full-scale reforms.

By transferring full responsibility for the administration of the courts to the Council for the Judiciary, it has become even more clear than at present that **the independent members named by law in the composition of the Judicial Council are for the most part not directly related to the issues of the organization of the work of district (city) courts and regional courts** (court administration and budgeting) (see. Annex 2). They do not receive remuneration for their participation in the work of the Council for the Judiciary, so it is not possible to request that they go into matters that are outside their area of competence, such as judicial budgeting. In addition, several institutions represented in the Council of the Judiciary apply for limited State budget funding – the Supreme Court, the Constitutional Court, the Prosecutor General's Office, 8 district (city) courts and 6 regional court institutions, but decision-making in matters of budget and financial management is provided for only in relation to district (city) courts and regional courts.

### **3) Functional duplication with the Judicial Council sharing responsibility with the Minister for Justice in the management of judicial work**

The Ministry of Justice, while retaining responsibility for the supervision of the activities of the Court Administration, functionally duplicates the cooperation with the Court Administration necessary for the performance of the tasks of the Council for the Judiciary.

In general, the management of the judicial system in Latvia is fragmented and has several organizational centres: many issues of work organization are provided either by the Judicial Council or by the executive in the person of the Ministry of Justice, the Minister of Justice or the Court Administration. Thus, the organisation and resources of the proceedings are the responsibility of those who are not responsible for ensuring procedural fairness in the courts and the final result of the judicial proceedings – the judges themselves. The separation of internal process management between the court and the court administration is considered suboptimal in the management literature, and is also a potential cause of organizational delays, since it is necessary to take too many procedural steps to make internal court decisions.

In order to improve the efficiency of work and to provide meaningful professional support to judges in legal work, it is necessary to simplify the model for the management of the judiciary. The preferred solution would be to integrate the organisational units of the judiciary and other stakeholders into a single hierarchical framework, which would be fully managed solely by the Council for the Judiciary. This would ensure, on the one hand, consultation and cooperation with other key partners, including the decision-making and executive branches. On the other hand, it would allow the judiciary, with the support of the Judicial Administration and the Council for the Judiciary, to function as a single entity with common objectives.

The principles of sound management require that those responsible for creating the final product have the right to decide how to carry out the tasks assigned to them. In order to be able to take responsibility for providing the judicial service in the most efficient way, courts should be empowered to manage their staff and budget. Currently, courts do not have a budget or sufficient discretion to manage or hire court staff. The quality of staff and the conditions of their employment affect the court's ability to fulfil its role both as a judicial authority and as a service provider. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that improving the quality of operation can excessively increase costs, and therefore the Council for the Judiciary must ensure monitoring of the balancing of costs with efficiency by carrying out a systematic analysis of the performance of the courts and setting thresholds for the resources optimally needed.

Reducing the involvement of the executive would be advisable in matters of judicial governance such as

(1) planning and development of a strategy for the development of the judicial system, since the most important strategic directions of action can be determined and implemented only by the judiciary itself;

(2) Organisation of court work by issuing internal regulatory enactments regarding issues of organisational management of courts and transfer of a vacant position of judge within the scope of the territory of operation of the court.

#### **4) The Council for the Judiciary does not have the necessary administrative capacity to manage the budget**

Without acquiring the right to manage the Judicial Administration, the Council for the Judiciary does not have the capacity to manage the administrative processes of the judiciary and to manage the budget of district (city) courts and regional courts. This is indicated, for example, by the fact that a permanent member (official) of the Council for the Judiciary has the right to authorise another person to participate in a meeting of<sup>14</sup> the Council for the Judiciary.

The existing problems in the operational nature of the work of the Council for the Judiciary and the fact that the Council is composed of a large number of high-level officials who are not employed in district (city) courts and regional courts, whose budget and financial management is planned to be supervised, make it urgent to review the composition and areas of responsibility of the Council for the Judiciary.

The administrative management capacity of the Council for the Judiciary can only be ensured if it has statutory powers to fully supervise and control the work of the Court Administration. The Council for the Judiciary shall be responsible for all matters relating to the selection of the Head of the Court Administration, the assignment of terms of reference and the evaluation. The Council for the Judiciary must approve the strategy and budget of the Judicial Administration, monitor the implementation of plans.

Uncertainty about the composition of the Judicial Council in its handling of budgetary planning and financial management issues affects the establishment of the most appropriate governance mechanism.

#### **5) The judiciary is not entrusted with reasonable self-determination in administrative matters, so that courts can take full responsibility for ensuring the efficiency of courts**

Court in the management of the institutions there are signs of organisational subordination to the Council of the Judiciary or the Minister of Justice, including the Court Administration. Part of the judicial authority's responsibility lies within the competence of other institutions, for example, all matters relating to the planning and use of the judicial authority's budget are the responsibility of the Court Administration.

The Law stipulates that the Court Administration shall organise and ensure the administrative work of district (city) courts, regional courts<sup>15</sup>, handle the funds of the court budget, ensure targeted and efficient use of state budget funds<sup>16</sup>. Consequently, the Court Administration is not only the single service centre for the courts by analogy with the case in other countries, but also the executor of the budget of district (city) courts and regional courts, which, within the meaning of the Law on Budget and Financial Management, is the head of institutions financed from the budget<sup>17</sup> and the actual organizer of administrative work. Court presidents, on the other hand, are tasked with directing and organising the work of the judicial authority<sup>18</sup>,

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<sup>14</sup> 89 of the Law "On the Judiciary", Article 3, fifth paragraph.

<sup>15</sup> 107 of the Law "On the Judiciary", Article 1, first paragraph.

<sup>16</sup> 107 of the Law "On the Judiciary", Article 1, second paragraph, subparagraphs 15 and 19.

<sup>17</sup> Chapter I of the Law on Budget and Financial Management

<sup>18</sup> Section 33, Paragraph one, Sub-paragraph 41 of the Third Paragraph and Section 40, Paragraph one of the Law On the Judiciary.

but have limited powers to independently plan the use of the judiciary's budget, determine the type and number of support staff, decide on the leave of judges<sup>19</sup> or participate in the judge's assessment.

One of the causes of inefficiency in the judiciary is the fact that resources are distributed by those who are not responsible for the outcome of the proceedings. As a result, centralised resource management has led to a situation where resource users – courts, require backup resources for security, which can lead to resource downtime. For example, the shared service of the Court Administration for courts is the centralised provision of clerks for court hearings. As a result, each judge of first instance has its own separate clerk for hearings. With the increase in the proportion of written proceedings, the need for the services of a clerk for hearings in the relevant judicial authority may decrease, but the review of the organisation of work is formally the responsibility of the Court Administration. Consequently, the unified approach to human resources management is too robust to meet the internal organisational needs of all judicial authorities and is ineffective – requiring much more internal administrative procedures than if each judicial authority were independent in organisational matters.

## **2.2. Goal**

Independent administrative management of courts adapted to modern judicial processes.

## **2.3. Necessary changes:**

Determine that

1. The Council for the Judiciary oversees and organises the administrative work of the judicial authorities.
2. The Court Administration is a judicial authority subordinate to the Council for the Judiciary, the purpose of which is to provide the necessary conditions for conducting proceedings before the courts and to provide services to the courts and the Council for the Judiciary.
3. Council for the Judiciary
  - 3.1. approve the by-laws and structure of the Court Administration;
  - 3.2. appoint and dismiss the Director of the Court Administration;
  - 3.3. lays down the principles of the organisation of the work of the courts and the Court Administration and mutual cooperation.
4. The Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Council for the Judiciary, develops the policy of the judicial system.
5. The Council for the Judiciary, in cooperation with the presidents of the courts, draws up a common strategy for the development of the justice system.
6. Transitional period

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<sup>19</sup> In other countries, the issue of leave orders is not extended to judges. Judges, as independent officials, must be aware of the impact of their absence on the composition of the rest of the court, judicial proceedings, inform colleagues and the court about their working hours and absences, but are not obliged to comply with various administrative orders.

## 2.4. Description of the solution:

After evaluating the experience of other countries and the existing institutional governance models in Latvia, it can be concluded that preference should be given to such institutional model which complies with the following criteria:

- 1) One management centre has been set up – the Judicial Council, which manages and coordinates the administration of the judiciary.
- 2) At least two-thirds of the composition of the Council for the Judiciary shall be made up of representatives delegated by judges;
- 3) There is **a clear relationship of subordination** between the commissioner in administrative matters of the courts, the Council for the Judiciary, and the executor, the Court Administration, which, as an administrative judicial authority, is subordinate to the Council for the Judiciary;
- 4) The district (city) court and the regional court, under the leadership of the Judicial Council, with the support of the Court Administration, operate as a single organizational unit with hierarchically **agreed objectives** and performance indicators.
- 5) In order to manage the efficiency of the judiciary on the merits, the budget management of the judicial system has been **consolidated with a system of judicial performance** management, which is currently separated into two different institutions, the Ministry of Justice and the Council for the Judiciary.

Results-based funding is gradually being introduced in Latvia and linking budget management to institutional performance.

When planning changes in the budget management of the courts, it is necessary not only to create a new model of budget management, but also, taking responsibility for the efficient and effective use of the judiciary's budget, to introduce a performance management system. The aim of the system is to monitor and improve the efficiency of the functioning of the courts, while not compromising the independence of individual judges.

The budget requests of the Ministry of Justice for the period 2018-2024 accumulate several dozen performance indicators of the judicial system (see Annex 9 of the analytical report), which covers various aspects of the activities and proceedings of district (city) courts and regional courts. The analysis of the achievement of the performance indicators accumulated in the budget explanations shows that, as a rule, the judicial system does not reach all the planned values of the indicators. It is possible that the achievement of the set result indicators is not as successful as planned, since the target values to be achieved are set and monitored in isolation from the fulfilment of the duty of litigation – courts and judges. There are also no reports that achieving the goals would be cascaded to the judge.

In order for the results to be an indicator of how effective the efforts of judges are, it is recommended that judges themselves agree on a narrower range of performance indicators, either at court instance level or individual court level. The achievement of a certain result should become a goal for which the court team assumes responsibility, independently monitors, discusses the causes of its non-execution and seeks solutions to increase efficiency.

Consequently, it is advisable to develop a common strategy for the development of the justice system with strategic objectives agreed across all judicial institutions, which have measurable performance and result indicators. The Council for the Judiciary should ensure the monitoring of the balancing of the costs of the justice system with the efficiency of the functioning of the courts by carrying out a systematic analysis of the performance of the courts and setting thresholds for the resources optimally needed, establishing a mechanism to ensure that cooperation between all parties involved in monitoring the performance of the judiciary is achieved.

It is also advisable to extend the powers of the president of the court to set the objectives of the judicial authority and to define performance that would cover not only the deadlines for

hearing cases in court, but also, for example, aspects of case flow management and human resource planning.

Measuring the performance of courts allows courts to collect and provide evidence of the success of meeting the needs and expectations of clients in court. Tracking the performance indicators of the courts is a necessary component of the accountability of the judiciary and a testament to the effective management of the judiciary as an industry. In order to demonstrate the quality of the provision of the court service and to allow to convey a message about its effectiveness to the Saeima, it is necessary not only to demonstrate the degree of achievement of performance indicators, but also to regularly obtain data on the actual working time consumed in the categories of the most frequently viewed cases, periodically performing measurements of the time consumed.

### Exclude the participation of the executive from the organization of the work of the courts

Reducing the involvement of the executive would be recommended in matters of judicial governance such as:

- 1) planning and strategy development of the judiciary, since the most important strategic directions of action can only be determined and implemented by the judiciary itself;
- 2) organisation of court work by issuing internal regulatory enactments on issues of organisational management of courts and transfer of a vacant position of judge within the scope of the territory of operation of the court, etc. Questions.

Possible amendments to laws and regulations are listed in detail in Annex 1.

To ensure that all members of the Judicial Council are experts in the organisation of the work of district (city) courts and regional courts The members of the Judicial Council must have deep knowledge and experience in the areas on which the Council has to make decisions – organisation and financing of the work of district (city) courts and regional courts, court personnel policy, IT systems, judicial premises, internal control, audit and other administrative matters. In order to prevent the self-isolation of judges or to ensure independent judicial expertise, for example on the appropriateness of the use of state budget funds, at least some of the members of the Council for the Judiciary should be represented in sectors not related to the judiciary.

In order to ensure that the specialisation of the members of the Council for the Judiciary is consistent with the tasks assigned to the Council for the Judiciary, there could be several scenarios for action: (1) Distinguishing between different levels of decision-making or the composition of the independent (voting) members of the Council for the Judiciary. (2) To change the composition of the Council for the Judiciary.

2. table. Scenarios for preventing inconsistencies between the specialisation of the members of the Council for the Judiciary and the tasks assigned to the Council for the Judiciary.

Scenario 1	Scenario 2
Different levels of decision-making by the Council for the Judiciary	Changed composition of the Council for the Judiciary
<p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide that only judges shall decide on matters relating to the organisation of the work of district (city) and regional courts (administration and budgeting of courts), the quality and quantitative aspects of judicial proceedings.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclude from the composition of the Council for the Judiciary members of the Council for the Judiciary who are not judges.</li> <li>• Supplement the composition of the Council for the Judiciary with one representative of court staff and one specialist in administrative matters.</li> </ul>

- These judges could exercise proper supervision and control over the activities of the Court Administration.

#### Disadvantages

- Around 90% of the items on the agenda of the Council for the Judiciary are in these areas. Non-judge members of the Judicial Council are very rarely required to attend meetings.

#### Score

**The recommended option** is to maintain the advantages of the existing model by creating a new model and expanding the competence of the Judicial Council.

#### Disadvantages

- The solution can be combined with scenario 1 and has the drawbacks of scenario 1.

#### Score

A very clear focus on issues of the organisation of judicial work, without complicating decision-making on other unrelated issues.

### To establish the subordination of the Court Administration to the Council for the Judiciary and to separate responsibilities that are outside the competence of the judicial system in support of the judicial system

Reorganisation of the Court Administration into an autonomous institution subordinate to the Council for the Judiciary, responsible for managing the budget of the courts, monitoring the efficiency of the courts, providing financial and human resources management and ICT services, ensuring the management of court buildings.

Not only the objective of fiscal independence of the judiciary, but also the functional duplication that arises from the performance of the same activities by the Judicial Administration, both in providing a service to the Council for the Judiciary, the judicial authorities and the Ministry of Justice, is a reason to rationalise the model of governance of the judicial system and to change the subordination of this institution from the executive to the judiciary, as described above.

International evaluations make extensive use of data on the budget of the justice system, therefore, in order not to create a misconception about the level of funding for the justice system, it **would be desirable to separate the part of the budget of the Court Administration that does not relate to the justice system in another budget programme.**

3. table. Scenarios for the reorganization of the judicial administration.

Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Subordination of the Ministry of Justice	Subordination of the Council for the Judiciary	Separation of functions not related to the organisation of judicial work
<p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservation of the judicial administration under the subordination of the Ministry of Justice, determining institutional subordination to the Ministry of Justice and functional subordination only in matters of court administration to the Council of the Judiciary</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking over the judicial administration under the subordination of the Council of the Judiciary with all existing functions, ensuring that the functional subordination of the Ministry of Justice includes the function of providing legal aid and organizing auctions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the Court Administration as a judicial institution subordinate to the Council for the Judiciary.</li> <li>• The Ministry of Justice reorganizes the functions of providing legal aid, organizing auctions, administering the e-case platform, creating a separate institution subordinate to the Ministry of Justice or adding it to the</li> </ul>

### Disadvantages

- A conflict arises between the fact that the Council for the Judiciary gives tasks to the Court Administration with regard to part of its competence, while the management of the Court Administration is responsible for its actions only to the Ministry of Justice. In the absence of a clear hierarchical relationship, in case of failure to perform tasks, justifications or arguments are used, which cannot be verified by the task giver. As a result, the budgeting and administration of the judiciary remains under the control of the Ministry of Justice.

### Score

The least desirable option.

### Disadvantages

- Similar to scenario 1, only the Council for the Judiciary has decisive power. The negative consequences for the judicial system are to a lesser extent than in scenario 1, since the control exercised by the Council of the Judiciary over most of the competence of the Court Administration, which, according to its director, is in the area of court administration in the amount of about 60-80%.
- The Ministry of Justice may supervise the performance of the functions under its control only through the Council for the Judiciary.

### Score

**The recommended option** is to maintain the advantages of the existing model by creating a new model and expanding the competence of the Judicial Council.

central apparatus of the Ministry of Justice.

### Disadvantages

- The creation of a new institution and the associated administrative costs (at least the position and remuneration of the Director) would be a decision that could not gain political support. However, this deficiency can be remedied if the Court Administration, under the authority of the Council for the Judiciary, provides services ineligible for the judiciary on behalf of the Ministry of Justice.

### Score

An ideal but unlikely solution in the coming years.

## Increase the self-determination of the judiciary and strengthen the role of the president of the court

District (city) courts are relatively large institutions<sup>20</sup> and the number of employees in one court exceeds as much as 400, therefore the court management team – court presidents, his deputies – must have the powers of a full-fledged manager, which are analogous to the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court or state administration institutions.

In Latvia, the president of the court has narrower powers than in comparable countries<sup>21</sup>. The Court Administration is an institution that organises and ensures the administrative work of district (city) courts, regional courts, handles the funds of the court budget, plans the revenue and expenditure resources of the court budget, as well as analyses economic indicators<sup>22</sup>, while in other countries institutions analogous to the Court Administration provide administrative services shared with the courts. Thus, in Latvia, the Court Administration has been granted similar powers as the head of the institution of direct administration with regard to the organisation of the work of regional courts and district (city) courts, while in other

<sup>20</sup> Riga City Court – 462 employees, including 104 judges, Zemgale District Court – 246 employees, including 50 judges; Riga District Court – 176 employees, including 37 judges; Administrative District Court – 153 employees, including 32 judges; Latgale District Court – 172 employees, including 31 judges; Kurzeme District Court – 161 employees.

<sup>21</sup> For a detailed overview of the desired powers of court presidents (managers), see Chapter 3 of the project "Improvement of the efficiency of the Latvian judicial system and budget planning": Analytical report 16. Annex. Comparison of the powers of the presidents of the court or the board of the court (hereinafter - the management of the court) in Latvia, Estonia, the Netherlands and Finland.

<sup>22</sup> 107 of the Law "On the Judiciary", Article 1, first paragraph and points 15, 16, 17 and 19 of the second paragraph.

countries the Court Administration is the single service centre (see Annex 5 for a comparison of the management models of the current, future and foreign justice system in Latvia).

The judicial administration should be a single service provider and not a centre for the administrative management of the judiciary.

4. table. Recommended comparison of the areas of responsibility of the management of the judicial institution and the areas of responsibility of the Court Administration as a single service provider.

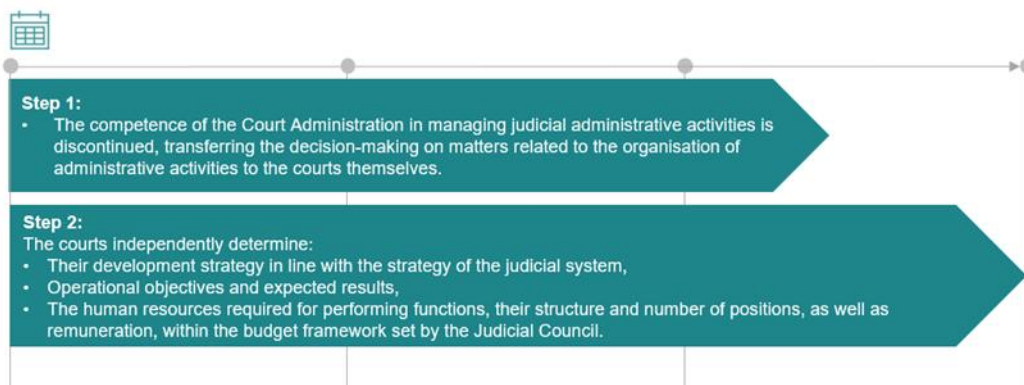
	Liability of the court	Responsibility of the court administration
<b>1. Basic financial accounting processes:</b>		
• Accounting for non-financial assets;		X
• Accounting for financial assets and advances;		X
• Accounting for inventories, liabilities, expenses and subsequent periods;		X
• Accounting for claims and revenue;		X
• Rent payments;		X
• Accounting of transactions;		X
• Changes in the order of accounting, calculations and errors, as well as the preparation of financial statements.		X
<b>2. Management processes:</b>		
• Planning;	X	Provides data
• Execution;	X	Provides data
• Control;	X	X
• Analysis;	X	X
• Forecasting.	X	Provides data
<b>3. Basic processes of personnel accounting and personnel management, which cover the following areas:</b>		
• Strategic management;	X	
• Personnel administration and reporting (including personnel data accounting, personnel movement, working time management);		X
• Recruitment and recruitment;	X	Administers
• Work performance and goals (e.g. work performance management);	X	
• Remuneration and benefits management;	X	
• Learning and development.	X	

In order to ensure the self-determination of the judicial authorities in administrative matters, it is recommended to move to the division of responsibilities between the courts and the Court Administration.

- As indicated in Table 4, the area of responsibility of the Court Administration should be the processes of personnel record-keeping, accounting, etc., while the president of the court and the rest of the court management team must ensure strategic management, planning, etc. management organizational processes.

- Recommended duties of the president of the court:
  - 1) Directs the work of the judicial authority;
  - 2) Determines the objectives (strategy) of the court's activities and organizes their achievement<sup>23</sup>. The results of the activities shall be discussed at annual working meetings of court judges or in individual development negotiations between the president of the court and the judge;
  - 3) Determines the organisational structure of the court and the composition of court officials in functions related to judicial proceedings (composition of the court);
  - 4) Responsible for promoting legal quality and uniform application of rights in court;
  - 5) Monitors the uniformity of the application of legal principles and the interpretation of law in court decisions;
  - 6) determines the duties of the deputy president of the court, the lawyer of the court;
  - 7) Approves or amends the plan for the allocation of cases and is responsible for the allocation of cases among the judges;
  - 8) Responsible for the division of duties among judges, appoints a judge to perform the duties of an investigating judge and a judge who will decide on the acceptance of the acquisition of the data to be retained from electronic communications merchants;
  - 9) Submits the court's annual report to the Council for the Judiciary.

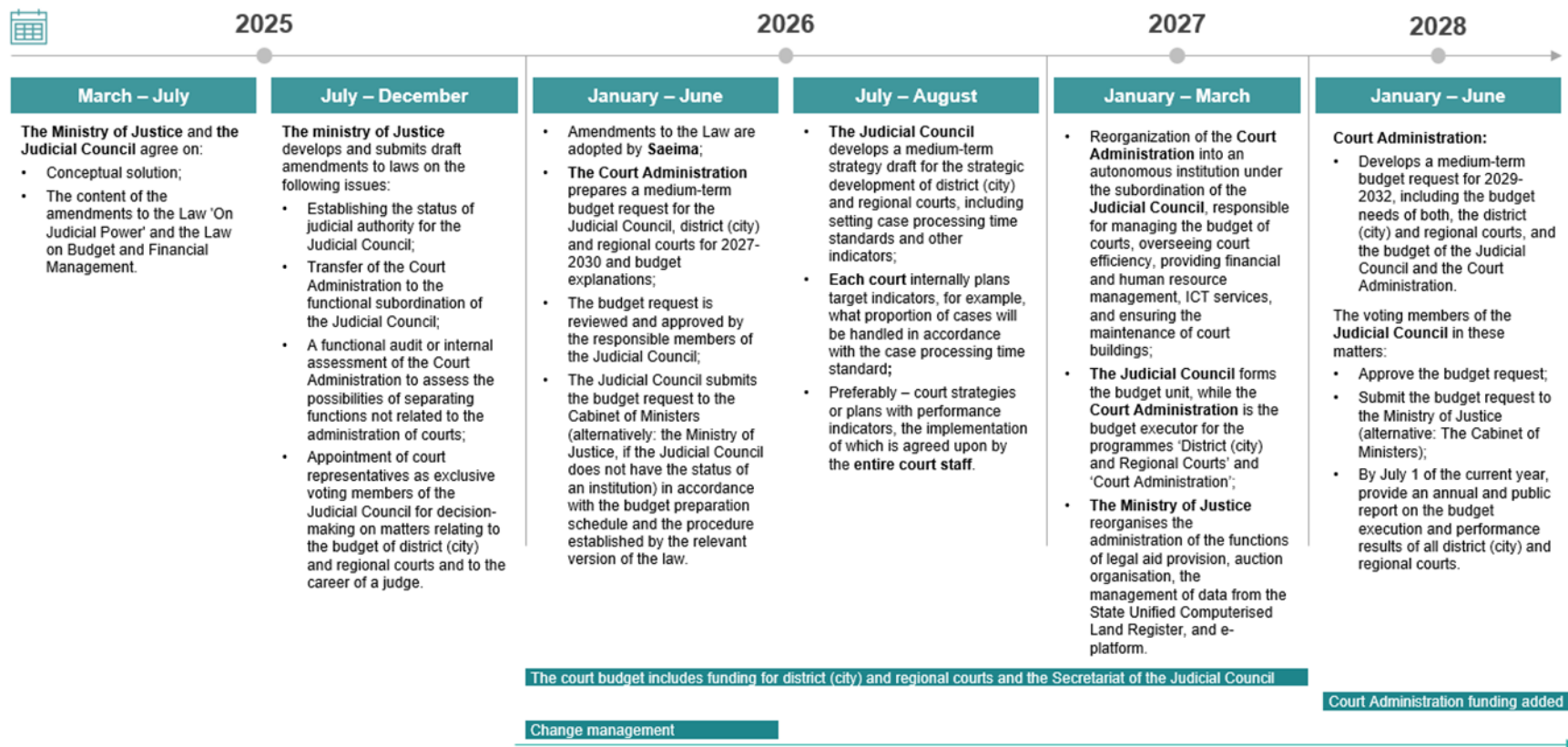
1. picture. A plan to strengthen the self-determination of the judicial authorities in administrative matters.



<sup>23</sup> It is advisable to clearly define the powers of the president of the court (management team) to set the objectives of the judicial authority and to determine the performance results, covering not only the deadlines for hearing cases in court, but also, for example, aspects of case flow management and human resource planning.

### 3. Roadmap for changes in the judicial budget management process

2. picture. A roadmap of changes in the budget management process.



### 3.1. The need for reforms:

The Council for the Judiciary points out that **fiscal and organisational dependence on the executive is one of the reasons why issues critical to the efficiency of the judiciary have not been addressed for a long time. For example, the issue of remuneration for the office of a judge has been partially resolved by only two judgments of the Constitutional Court, there continues to be an inadequately low remuneration of court employees compared to the requirements to be made.**

The Constitutional Court drew attention to the fact that an effective procedure for ensuring the financial independence of independent institutions exists if these institutions, among other things, have the right to justify their budget request to the Cabinet of Ministers and the Saeima (see paragraphs 15 and 15.1 of the judgment in case No. 2010-06-01).<sup>24</sup> True financial independence, as the Constitutional Court points out, is only if the legislator grants independent institutions the procedural right to be heard and to obtain justification in cases where the budget request is amended<sup>25</sup>. If the budget request is directed by the Ministry of Justice, then district (city) courts and regional courts have fewer opportunities to be heard.

Two laws and regulations<sup>26</sup> – the Law on the Judiciary and the Law on Budget and Financial Management – stipulate the procedures for drawing up a request for a court budget. Budget requests submitted by district (city) courts and regional courts are compiled and accompanied by the opinion of the Council for the Judiciary, are forwarded by the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Finance.<sup>27</sup> The Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court submit the budget request to the Ministry of Finance independently.

The Minister for Finance shall ensure the development of the State budget draft law on the basis of budget requests submitted in accordance with the provisions of the Law. The Cabinet shall include the budget request in the draft State budget law. Neither the budget requests of the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court, nor the budget requests of district (city) courts and regional courts<sup>28</sup> until the submission of the draft budget law to the Cabinet without the consent of the applicant may be amended. Although district (city) courts and regional courts do not submit a budget request on their own, within the meaning of the Budget and Financial Management Act,<sup>29</sup> it is the courts that are to be regarded as applicants. The regulation of the Law on the Judiciary in this matter is less favourable to the courts, since the Ministry of Justice is designated as the applicant. The law<sup>30</sup> emphasizes that the Judicial Council's differing opinion on the submitted budget request does not stop it from being submitted to the Ministry of Finance.

If, however, there is such a situation when the Cabinet amends the budget request without the consent of the applicant, the justification for the decision shall indicate how the reduction of the financing will affect ensuring the operation of the relevant institutions specified in laws and regulations.<sup>31</sup>

Of the entire state budget program "03.00.00 Judicial System", the Judicial Council currently examines and gives an opinion on one sub-program of the state budget "03.02.00 Regional and district (city) courts", but it does not have the competence to consider, for example, another sub-program "03.01.00 Court Administration" that is relevant to the courts.

The court administration is an institution that organizes and ensures the administrative work of district (city) courts, regional courts, handles the funds of the judicial budget, plans the

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<sup>24</sup> Decision of the Constitutional Court of 08.06.2012 "On termination of legal proceedings in case No.2011-18-01". Available: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/248963-par-tiesvedibas-izbeigsanu-lieta-nr-2011-18-01>.

<sup>25</sup> See paragraph 11.5 of the judgment of the Constitutional Court of 18.01.2010 in case No. 2009-11-01.

<sup>26</sup> The budget management of the Constitutional Court is not within the scope of the project, therefore it is not further analyzed.

<sup>27</sup> Section 19, Paragraph six, third sentence of the Law on Budget and Financial Management.

<sup>28</sup> Section 19, paragraphs five, six and ten of the Law on Budget and Financial Management.

<sup>29</sup> Section 19, Paragraphs five and six of the Law on Budget and Financial Management.

<sup>30</sup> Law "On the Judiciary" 50.Article 2, fifth paragraph.

<sup>31</sup> Section 19, Paragraphs five and six of the Law on Budget and Financial Management.

revenue and expenditure resources of the court budget, as well as analyses economic indicators<sup>32</sup>; prepare a draft budget request for ensuring the work of the courts and ensure targeted and efficient use of State budget funds. Consequently, the Court Administration has been granted analogous powers as head of the direct administration with regard to the budget of the regional courts and the district (city) courts.

The administrative activities of district (city) courts and regional courts depend on the services provided by the Court Administration to the courts – budget and financial management, accounting, personnel management, working infrastructure and technology. However, the judges point to significant problems in the efficiency of work, especially due to the slow functioning of information and communication technologies provided by the Court Administration, which was highlighted by 47% of those surveyed. There are also shortcomings in the maintenance of court buildings. A separate budget sub-programme has been created for the activities of the judicial administration: "Court Administration", the promotion of which is the sole responsibility of the executive and the coordination of which is not within the competence of the Council for the Judiciary.

The functions of the Judicial Council are mostly related to ensuring the operation of the district (city) and regional courts, for example, determining the specific court where a judge performs their duties, determining the number of judges, organising the career of a judge. However, by its composition, the Council for the Judiciary currently serves as an advisory body for the judiciary and for representatives of persons belonging to the judicial system and political officials. Entrusting responsibility for the planning and control of the use of the budget of the first and appellate instance to a constituent body whose members do not generate revenue from the budget in question, there is a risk that the management of the budget will be formal without the necessary in-depth analysis and accountability. Additional challenges are also posed by the fact that all members of the Judicial Council are not officials in the legal sense of the state<sup>33</sup> and that the collegiate body, which consists of 15 senior officials, lacks the operational capacity necessary for the budgetary management process.

The Council for the Judiciary is a collegial body whose activities are welcomed by judges. In a 2025 survey of judges on the independence of the judiciary conducted by the ENCJ, judges rated the independence of the Judicial Council on average with 7.1 points on a 10-ball scale, and 72% of judges acknowledged that the Judicial Council respects the independence of judges<sup>34</sup>. The Council has many issues that are important for the justice system as a whole to decide. In order to preserve the essential aspects of the functioning of the Council for the Judiciary as an organ of intersectoral cooperation, it is necessary to distinguish between decision-making on issues of internal organisation of the work of the courts and issues to be dealt with jointly by the entire judicial system, including in the law the delegation to take decisions on certain issues to a narrowed composition of the Council for the Judiciary.

### **3.2. Goal**

The objective set by the Council for the Judiciary is to achieve the fiscal independence of the judiciary as a constitutional organ, including by establishing an appropriate institutional status and functions of the Council for the Judiciary, taking over the necessary functions from the executive.

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<sup>32</sup> 107 of the Law "On the Judiciary". Article 1, first paragraph and points 15, 16, 17 and 19 of the second paragraph.

<sup>33</sup> See. Egils Levits. The concept of the State Administration Structure Law. Available at: <https://www.vestnesis.lv/ta/id/63685>.

<sup>34</sup> European Network of Councils for the Judiciary (ENCJ). ENCJ Survey among judges on Independence of the Judiciary. Available at: [https://pgwrk-websitemedia.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/production/pwk-web-encj2017-p/Report%20ENCJ%20Survey%20on%20Independence-compressed\\_0.pdf](https://pgwrk-websitemedia.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/production/pwk-web-encj2017-p/Report%20ENCJ%20Survey%20on%20Independence-compressed_0.pdf)

## Phase 1: Transition period: Semi-independent budget management of the judiciary until 2028

### 3.3. Description of the solution:

#### Determine the status of a judicial authority for the Court Administration

The Council for the Judiciary becomes the leading authority in matters relating to the organisation of judicial work.

#### The Court Administration passes to the functional subordination of the Council for the Judiciary. Determine the functional subordination of the Court Administration to the Council for the Judiciary

The solution is that the Court Administration is an institution of direct administration under the institutional authority of the Ministry of Justice and under the functional authority of the Council for the Judiciary. (A more preferable alternative: The judicial administration is under the institutional authority of the Council for the Judiciary and the functional authority of the Ministry of Justice for certain functions, since the function of administering courts is dominant in the institution and is carried out in the amount of around 60-80%).

Supervision does not apply to the performance of the tasks given by the Council of the Judiciary to the Court Administration, issues of internal organisation, including the issuance of internal regulatory enactments, decisions relating to employees (for example, decisions on the acceptance and dismissal of employees, transfer and its coordination, secondment on mission, initiation, examination and application of disciplinary matters). Supervision includes the right of the Minister for Justice to verify the legality of administrative decisions taken by the Director of Court Administration and to annul illegal decisions, as well as, upon establishing unlawful omission, to order a decision.

#### To distinguish between the members of the Council for the Judiciary who decide on judicial budgetary matters

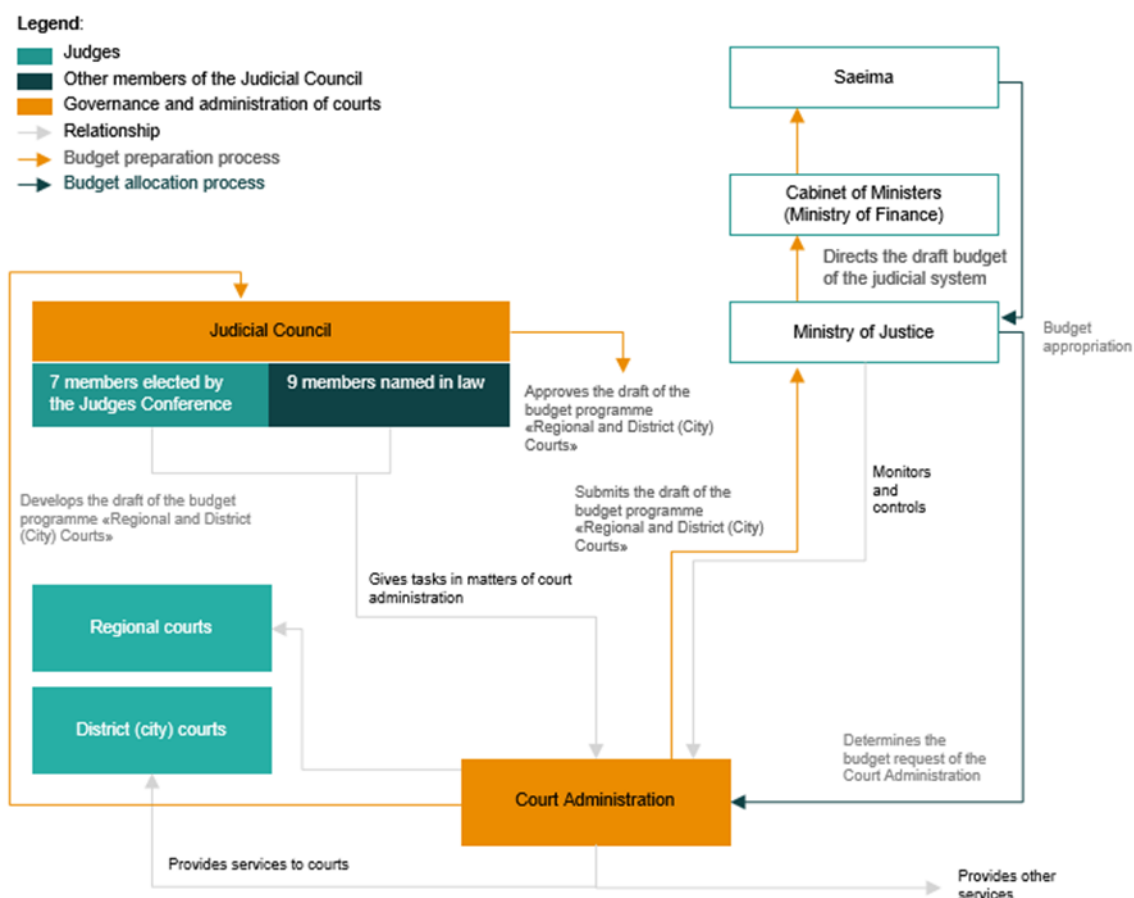
In both options, we recommend that judicial budget issues should be decided by judges in the Council for the Judiciary (see scenario 2 of Chapter 2.3 of the report) and, in order to avoid the risk of judicial self-isolation, by members of the Judicial Council who are independent of the judiciary as specialists in budgetary and administrative management matters.

Determine that the Council for the Judiciary participates in the development of judicial policy and strategy, as well as in the improvement of the organisation of the work of the judicial system<sup>35</sup>. The Judicial Council develops a draft medium-term strategy for the strategic development of regional and district (city), including establishing standards and other indicators for the handling of cases. Each court internally plans target indicators, such as how high the proportion of cases will be heard according to the standard for hearing cases.

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<sup>35</sup> 89 of the Law "On the Judiciary" Article 1 .

3. picture. Scheme of the model of temporary judicial self-government, with the Council for the Judiciary acquiring the right to assign tasks to the Court Administration in matters of the organisation of judicial work.



## Phase 2: Independent and modern judicial administrative management adapted to the needs of the judicial process from 2028 onwards

To establish the subordination of the Court Administration to the Council for the Judiciary and to separate responsibilities that are outside the competence of the judicial system in support of the judicial system

In order to ensure judicial self-governance independent of the executive, all institutions essential to the functioning of the courts must be under a single organisational subordination, managed both functionally and institutionally by the Council for the Judiciary.

The judicial system<sup>36</sup> must establish a budget department<sup>36</sup> within the meaning of the Law on Budget and Financial Management in order to be able to ensure independent management of the budget of district (city) courts and regional courts, the Council of the Judiciary and the Court Administration.

Since the Court Administration is the unified administrative service centre for district (city) courts and regional courts, it is necessary that the Court Administration is an institution under the authority of the Council for the Judiciary. Court administrative issues such as planning and management of human resources, budget planning, accounting, provision of information systems, data accumulation and analysis, case flow management, provision of court premises and security measures are an integral part of the internal organization of the work of the judicial

<sup>36</sup> Budget department - a ministry, another central State institution or a set of resources and expenditure separated separately from the budgets of ministries or other central State institutions for which budget resources are provided for in the State budget law directly in accordance with the procedures for appropriation. (Part I of the Law on Budget and Financial Management).

system. In order for the courts to be able to perform their functions effectively, the management of the judicial authorities must be the one that determines the quality of the administrative and organisational procedure of the courts.

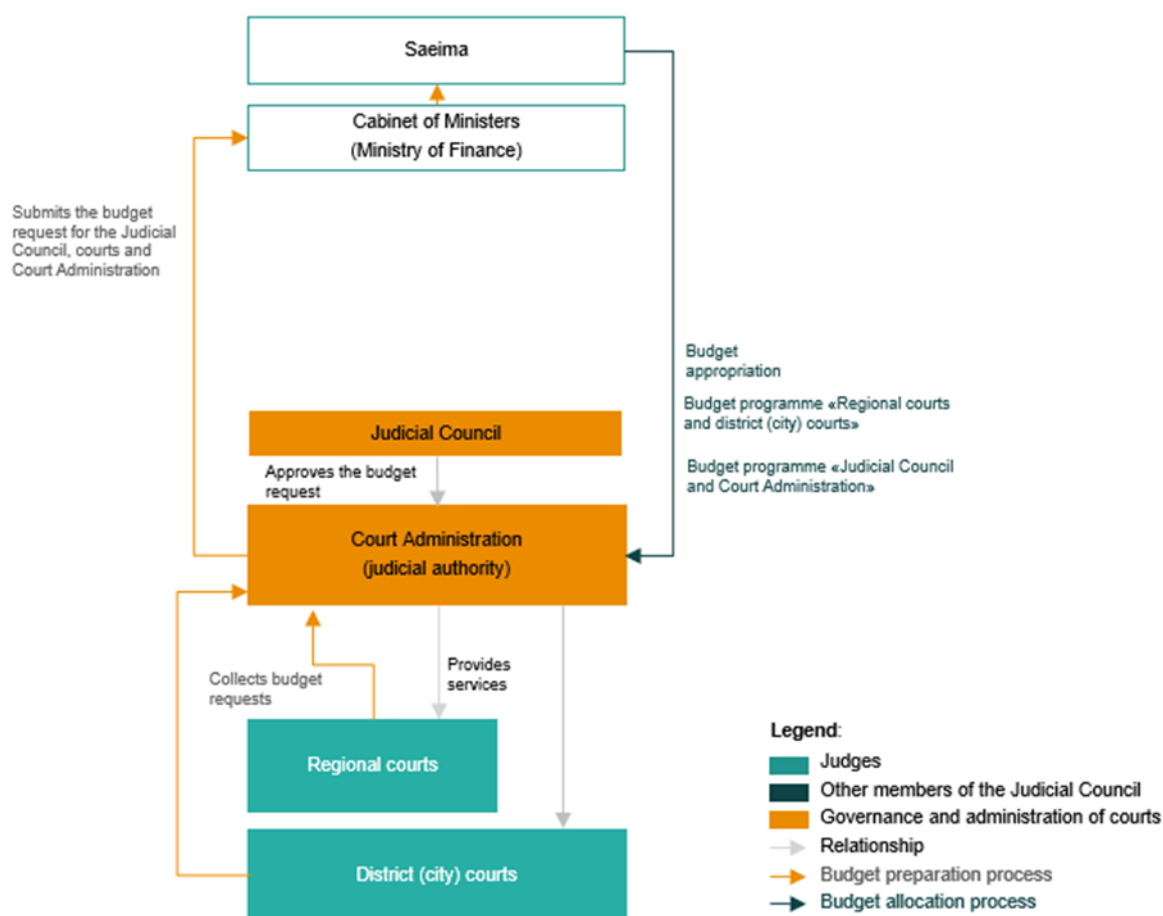
As a result of such a solution, the courts would acquire self-government independent of the executive and would become fully responsible for their activities. The Council for the Judiciary would assume full responsibility for ensuring the functioning of the entire judicial system, including budgeting, coordination of work and monitoring the achievement of planned performance, excluding a direct link between the Minister for Justice and the courts.

### To distinguish between the decision-making of the Council for the Judiciary on matters of organisation of the internal work of the courts and issues to be dealt with jointly by the entire judicial system

In order to preserve the essential aspects of the functioning of the Council for the Judiciary as an organ of intersectoral cooperation, it is necessary to distinguish between decision-making on matters of internal organisation of the work of the courts and issues to be dealt with jointly by the entire judicial system. This can be done by including in law a delegation to take decisions on certain matters to a narrowed composition of the Council for the Judiciary. The easiest way to do this is to enshrine in regulatory enactments that decisions on issues of organisation of the work of the courts are transferred to the Management Council of the Court Administration established by the Council for the Judiciary.

The composition of the Management Council of the Court Administration (hereinafter - the Management Council), similar to the case in Finland, could consist of the members of the Council for the Judiciary, elected by the Conference of Judges, including also the President of the Supreme Court and the President of the Constitutional Court (see Annex 2). In other countries (e.g. the Netherlands), the Management Board is composed of an analogous body only those judges representing the courts served by the Court Administration and by a representative of the executive.

4. picture. Recommended scheme for the model of independent judicial self-government (budget management of the judiciary led by the Council for the Judiciary).



### 3.4. Possible changes in regulatory enactments:

In order to fully achieve the objective of ensuring the fiscal independence of the judiciary and the fact that judges decide autonomously from the executive on internal administrative matters of the courts, plan and develop a budget request, we recommend:

#### 1. To amend the Law on the Judiciary as follows:

1.1. To supplement Act 89. <sup>Article 1</sup> with a new sentence in the following wording (alternative: amendments to Article 82 of the Constitution<sup>37</sup>): "The Council for the Judiciary shall organize the administrative work of the courts. Its work is provided by the Secretariat of the Council for the Judiciary. The Council for the Judiciary shall decide on the areas of operation of courts and courthouses and their location and shall approve the request for the budget of the courts."

1.2. To express the first paragraph of Section 107 of the Act as follows: Section 107. Competence of the Council for the Judiciary. (1) The Council for the Judiciary shall be responsible for the administration of courts, and it shall perform the functions specified in this Law.

<sup>37</sup> The solution proposed in the Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 547 of August 28, 2003 "On the Concept of Court Administration" Available: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/78433-par-tiesu-administracijas-koncepciju>.

- 1.3. To express the first sentence of the second paragraph of Section 107 of the Act as follows: "(2) The Council for the Judiciary".
- 1.4. Delete the fifth paragraph of the second paragraph of Section 107 of the Law.
- 1.5. To express 107 of the Act. The first paragraph of Article 1 reads as follows: "The judicial administration is a judicial authority subordinate to the Council of the Judiciary, which provides services for the provision of administrative work of district (city) courts, regional courts. The Council for the Judiciary shall approve the bylaws of the Judicial Administration."
- 1.6. To supplement Act 107. The second paragraph of Article 1 with a new paragraph in the following wording: "monitors the achievement of judicial efficiency indicators, identifying deviations from the planned and in-depth analysis of the causes of deviations, requests from district (city) courts, regional courts the information necessary for it to perform the functions specified in regulatory enactments."
- 1.7. To supplement Act 107.<sup>Article 1</sup>, second paragraph, with a new paragraph to read as follows: "periodic reports on the results of the analysis of the work of the courts shall be published once a year."
- 1.8. **Option 1:** Delete Act 89. <sup>Section 2</sup>, Paragraph one, Clauses 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and supplement 89 of the Law. In the fourth paragraph of Article 2, after the word "Ombudsman" with the words: "the Minister for Justice, the Chairperson of the Legal Commission of the Saeima, the Prosecutor General, the Chairperson of the Latvian Council of Sworn Advocates, the Chairperson of the Latvian Council of Sworn Notaries and the Chairperson of the Latvian Council of Sworn Bailiffs".

**Option 2:** Supplement Act 89. Article <sup>11</sup> with a new section in the following wording "Only 89 of the Law shall participate in decision-making on the matters referred to in Paragraphs one, two, five, six, nine and eleven, and Section 107, Section 33, Paragraph two (in accordance with Table 6). Article <sup>2</sup>, first paragraph, points 1 and 2 and 89. the officials referred to in the second paragraph of Article 2."

- 1.9. To amend Act 89. Article <sup>11</sup>: in **option 1** "Council for the Judiciary" or in **option 2** "89. Article <sup>2</sup>, first paragraph, points 1 and 2 and 89. <sup>Officials referred to in the second paragraph of Article 2</sup>"
  - 1.9.1. approves the development strategy of regional and district (city) courts and the Court Administration, the objectives and results of activities to be achieved with budgetary resources and monitors their implementation;
  - 1.9.2. determine the areas of operation of courthouses and courthouses and their location;
  - 1.9.3. approves the request for annual and medium-term budgets of regional courts and district (city) courts, the budget implementation plan (investment and procurement plan) and monitors that the use of state budget funds is efficient and rational;
  - 1.9.4. ensure the compliance of the activities of the Court Administration with regulatory enactments, the operation of the internal control and risk management system;
  - 1.9.5. develops the procedure for the selection of the Director of Court Administration, organizes the selection, appoints or removes from office, supervises the work of the Director;
  - 1.9.6. approves the conclusion of a substantial contract or transaction by the Court Administration or gives its consent to the conclusion of a transaction the amount of which exceeds EUR 300 000 (excluding value added tax), provides an opinion on fundamentally important issues of operation of the Court Administration;
  - 1.9.7. determine the procedures and time periods by which the Court Administration shall submit to the Council of Justice information on the number and composition of the Court Administration and court staff, the distribution of State budget resources by judicial institutions and receive a report on the use of State budget resources.
- 1.10. ensure the availability of information on budgets;

## 2. To amend the Law on Budget and Financial Management<sup>38</sup>:

- 2.1. delete 16 of the Act. In the third paragraph of Article 1, the words "district (city) courts, regional courts and" and after the words "Constitutional Court" shall be inserted the words "to the Council of the Judiciary,"
- 2.2. In Article 19, Paragraph five, after the words "Constitutional Courts," by inserting the words "Councils for the Judiciary,"

## 3.5. Institutions involved and their competence

The recommended solutions include changes in the areas of competence of judicial authorities. The recommended division of responsibilities is listed in Table 6.

5. table. The recommended division of competence of the institutions involved.

Institution or body	Function/Competence
Saeima	Decides on the state budget for judicial authorities. Approves the accounts for the implementation of the budget and the achievement of the planned results of the activity.
Cabinet of Ministers	Approves the draft state budget law, indicating the justification for the budget request submitted by the Council for the Judiciary to the district (city) courts and regional courts, the Council of the Judiciary and the Court Administration.
Ministry of Finance	Includes in the draft state budget bill the budget request submitted by the Council for the Judiciary to district (city) courts and regional courts, the Council of the Judiciary and the Court Administration.
Council for the Judiciary (in full currently statutory composition)	Determines the areas and locations of district (city) courts, their courthouses, as well as regional courts, their courthouses. Hears candidates for the position of judge of the Constitutional Court and provides the Saeima with an opinion on them. Hears candidates for the office of President of the Supreme Court and provides an opinion on them to the plenum of the Supreme Court. Evaluate the candidates for the position of the Prosecutor General, select the most suitable one and direct it to the Saeima for appointment to the position of the Prosecutor General. Hears the annual report of the Court Administration on the results of its work. In the cases and in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Constitutional Court Law, an application for the initiation of a case may be submitted to the Constitutional Court. Approves the by-laws / procedure of the competition for the selection of candidates for the position of judge. Conferred the title of Honorary Judge.
Members of the Council for the Judiciary – judges (Act 89. Article 2, first paragraph, points 1 and 2 and 89.the officials referred to in the second paragraph of Article 2)	<b>Human resource management</b> Performs organizational management of district (city) courts, regional courts, organizes administrative work of district (city) courts, regional courts. Represents the interests of the judiciary. Approves and oversees the human resources planning, staff remuneration and motivation policies of the courts. Provides objective measurement of the workload of the courts. Estimates the number of resources required to ensure the quality of litigation. Determines the number of judges in each district (city) court and regional court, the total number of senators in departments. The President of the Court shall be appointed. Determines a specific district (city) court or its courthouse with an appropriate judge. the place of performance of official duties within the territory of the court's activity. Determines a specific regional court or its courthouse in which the duties of a judge are to be performed. Samples of the mantle and the post mark and the order of use shall be approved.

<sup>38</sup> The version of the Law in force until 01.06.2025.

The model of the certificate of office of the judge shall be approved.  
Decides on the transfer of a vacant position of judge within the territory of the court's activity.  
Decides on the transfer of a judge to another court or courthouse of the same level.  
Decides on the transfer of a judge to the regional court.  
Decides on the transfer of a judge to a lower court.  
Decides on the transfer of a judge to the post of judge of the Supreme Court.  
Decides on the transfer of a judge in the event of a reorganisation of the court.  
Assign the duties of a judge of a district (city) court to a judge of another district (city) court or a judge of a regional court if he or she has given his written consent.  
Assign the duties of a regional court judge to a judge of another regional court if that person has given his or her written consent.  
Instructs the district (city) court judge to replace the regional court judge during a vacancy or temporary absence.  
Instructs a regional court judge to replace a supreme court judge during a vacancy or temporary absence.  
The content and procedures for the examination of the professional knowledge of judges shall be determined, as well as the samples of documents necessary for the examination of the professional knowledge of judges shall be approved.  
The by-laws of the Conference of Judges shall be approved, as well as the Conference of Judges shall be convened, determining the issues to be considered therein.  
Approves the rules of procedure of the Judicial Ethics Commission.

#### **Strategy and budget**

Approves the strategy for the development of regional and district (city) courts and the Court Administration, the objectives and results of activities to be achieved with budgetary resources and monitors their implementation. Develop financial and performance indicators for 4 years (n+1, n+2, n+3, n+4).  
Approves the annual and medium-term budget request of the regional courts and district (city) courts, the Court Administration, the budget implementation plan (investment and procurement plan) and monitors that the use of state budget funds is efficient and rational.  
Ensure the availability of information on budgets.  
The annual report on the implementation of the budget and the annual public accounts shall be approved.  
Develops the procedure for the selection of the Director of Court Administration, organizes the selection, appoints / removes from office, supervises the work of the director and the administrative management team.

#### **Internal control**

Supervises the compliance of the activities of the Court Administration with laws and regulations, the operation of the internal control and risk management system.  
The by-laws and rules of procedure of the Court Administration shall be approved.  
Develops the procedure for the selection of the Director of Court Administration, organizes the selection, appoints or removes from office, supervises the work of the Director.  
Issues internal regulatory enactments on issues of organizational management of district (city) courts, regional courts.  
Approves the general principles for the organization of accounting and financial control of the judicial authority.  
Approves the conclusion of a substantial contract or transaction by the Court Administration or gives consent to the conclusion of a transaction the amount of which exceeds EUR 300 000 (excluding value added tax), provides an opinion on fundamentally important issues of the activities of the Court Administration.  
Requests from district (city) courts, regional courts, the Court Administration information that it needs for the performance of the functions specified in regulatory enactments.

#### **Processes**

The standard for the time limit for handling cases is approved.  
Approves the basic principles of specialisation of judges and the procedure for determining caseload indicators, as well as develops guidelines on other issues of the organisation of court work.

Court administration	<p>Prepare and, in accordance with the procedures laid down in laws and regulations, develop a proposal regarding the financing necessary for the performance of the tasks of district (city) courts, regional courts, the Council of Justice and the Court Administration from the State budget.</p> <p>Within a time period specified by the Council for the Judiciary, a proposal on the financing necessary for the performance of the tasks of district (city) courts, regional courts, the Council of the Judiciary and the Court Administration shall be submitted from the State budget for examination and approval by the Council of the Judiciary.</p> <p>Provides administrative activities of district (city) courts, regional courts, providing accounting services, centralized accounting, personnel record-keeping, budget planning and financial management services.</p> <p>Ensure the operation and development of the State information systems under the supervision or holding of the Court Administration.</p> <p>Issues internal regulatory enactments regarding the organization of administrative and economic work of courts, as well as conducts inspections.</p> <p>Performs monitoring of the achievement of judicial efficiency indicators, identifying deviations from the planned and in-depth analysis of the causes of deviations, requests from district (city) courts, regional courts the information necessary for it to perform the functions specified in regulatory enactments.</p> <p>At least once a year, a report on the results of the analysis of the work of the courts shall be published.</p> <p>Provides support (shares competence) in matters of work organisation and human resource management in the courts.</p> <p>Provides other support to court presidents (managers).</p> <p>Prepares an annual report on the implementation of the budget of district (city) courts, regional courts, the Council of the Judiciary and the Court Administration and an annual public report.</p>
Administration of the court - the president and deputies of the district (city) court, the regional court (administrative manager, if any)	<p><b>The President of the Court shall:</b></p> <p>Directs the work of the judicial authority.</p> <p>Determines the objectives (strategy) of the court's activities and organizes their achievement. The results of the activities are discussed at annual working meetings of court judges or in individual development negotiations between the president of the court and the judge.</p> <p>Determines the organisational structure of the court and the composition of court officials in functions related to judicial proceedings (composition of the court).</p> <p>Responsible for promoting legal quality and uniform application of rights in court.</p> <p>Monitors the uniformity of the application of legal principles and the interpretation of law in court decisions.</p> <p>Develops internal procedures for the procedure for the distribution of cases in court, external cooperation, the procedure for handling complaints.</p> <p>The duties of the position of the deputy president of the court, the lawyer of the court and the administrative manager shall be determined.</p> <p>Participates in the selection of a judge for a vacant position in the court.</p> <p>Approves or amends the plan for the distribution of cases and is responsible for the distribution of cases among judges.</p> <p>Responsible for the distribution of duties among judges, appoints a judge to perform the duties of an investigating judge and a judge who will decide on the acceptance of the acquisition of data to be retained from electronic communications merchants.</p> <p>Prepares the information of the annual report and submits it to the Council for the Judiciary (Court Administration).</p> <p>-</p>
Ministry of Justice	<p>Development, organisation and coordination of judicial policies</p> <p>Discusses with the Judicial Council the justification for substantial changes to the budget request for regional courts and district (city) courts</p> <p>Cooperates with the Council for the Judiciary in monitoring the performance of the judiciary</p> <p>Provides advisory support and recommendations in solving issues related to court management, budget planning, career development of judges, as well as the development of the justice system and other issues related to the strengthening of the justice system. .</p>
Institutions belonging to the judicial system	<p>Informs the Council of the Judiciary about industry news</p> <p>Cooperates with the Council for the Judiciary on issues of judicial system development and work organisation.</p>



## 4. Reforms in the field of human resource planning and management

### 4.1. The need for reforms:

#### 1) There is no such institute of assistant judges as to relieve the work of a judge

One of the long-standing systematic challenges of the judicial system is the development of the Assistant Judge<sup>39</sup> Institute, which has so far failed to ensure effective workload for judges and the sustainable attraction of legal support staff.<sup>40</sup> The judicial system does not have an effective assistant judge institute that would contribute to an increase in the productivity of judges, the study of legal issues carried out on behalf of the judge and the preparation of high-quality legal documents, enabling judges to focus on adjudicating cases on the merits. As a result, the workload of the judge is increased by the performance of duties that could be performed by other specialists.

In a survey conducted by PwC, which included about 31% of all judges of the courts of first instance and appellate courts, 77% of judges indicated that they did not have access to a qualified assistant judge in legal matters, while 53% believed that the proceedings could be conducted 20-30% faster if such support were available.

The legal function of the assistant judge is not sufficiently separated from the technical and administrative duties, which significantly reduces the contribution to the administration of justice. Furthermore, there is no centralised and uniform system of training for assistant judges before taking up their duties. In interviews, the judges pointed out that the current approach places an additional burden on them to train the young assistant judges individually.

At the same time, attempts to increase the remuneration of the assistant judge for all 554 assistant judges<sup>41</sup> have a significant fiscal impact on the state budget. Raising the remuneration of all assistant judges from the state budget would require additional funding of around €2.9 million per year<sup>42</sup>, which would represent an increase of 21% compared to the current cost of assistant judge remuneration. However, such a universal approach does not allow attracting highly qualified lawyers or persons with a bachelor's degree in law due to the uncompetitiveness of the remuneration offered.

This situation has arisen because, in conditions of limited funding, a quantitative approach has been preferred, i.e. the recruitment of assistant judges of uniform qualifications to all judges, regardless of judicial instance or specialisation, rather than a choice has been made in favour of qualitative considerations, recruiting a smaller number of specialists competent in legal matters. Court staff policy in Latvia is formed centrally by the Court Administration, not by the courts themselves. The mission of the court administration is to ensure equal access to all entities in the provision of services to the courts.

Only the judicial authorities themselves, individually, understanding the limitations on the availability of resources, can decide on changes in the organization of work in the court and differentiate the types of assistant judges needed in court. As a result, specialised legal

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<sup>39</sup> In accordance with the report of the State Audit Office of the Republic of Latvia "Access and Development of Human Resources in Latvian Courts" and information provided in interviews.

<sup>40</sup> Council for the Judiciary. (2024). Action Line 3 of the Strategy of the Council for the Judiciary 2021-2025 "Effective and quality judiciary" for the implementation of these tasks. On the specialization of land register cases in the courts. Available at: <https://www.tieslietupadome.lv/lv/media/9019/download?attachment>.

<sup>41</sup> Court administration data as of 30.09.2024.

<sup>42</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers calculations. Assuming that the average remuneration of an assistant judge is 1638 euros, as well as applying to the SSIA in the amount of 23.59% of the monthly salary and a vacation allowance of 30% of the monthly salary, the current cost of an assistant judge is 13,775,121 euros / year. Increasing the salary of all assistant judges to 1980 euros per month would increase the total cost to 16,651,246 euros / year. Accordingly, an additional 2,876,124 euros / year would be required.

support could be achieved, and the competences of the assistant judge could be brought into line with the specialisation of the court or judge.

## **2) Remuneration is not competitive, which makes it difficult to attract qualified employees**

The competitiveness of the position of assistant judge in the labour market is significantly limited due to low pay and outdated regulatory framework. This makes it difficult to attract professional and qualified lawyers to the judicial system. Currently, the position of assistant judge is included in the 9th monthly salary group, since the requirements for the position defined by law are low<sup>43</sup> and do not correspond to the internationally recognized qualification of the position of assistant judge in legal matters. This limits the provision of competitive remuneration, with the result that the institute of assistant judges loses competition with equivalent positions in the prosecutor's office, public administration or the private sector.

The Court Administration, on the basis of the recommendations of the Council for the Judiciary, has updated the job description of an assistant judge, stipulating that the applicant must have a higher education in law, preferably with a qualification as a lawyer.<sup>44</sup> The job descriptions also indicate that 70% of the most important duties of an assistant judge include the management of judicial cases, participation in the preparation of a case for consideration and ensuring its consideration, conducting research and analysis of the legal framework, preparation of procedural decisions and documents that require certain legal competences.<sup>368</sup> However, the Law on the Judiciary and the Cabinet Regulations<sup>45</sup> still do not reflect the requirements and level of responsibility of this position of assistant judge. Accordingly, the job description included in regulatory enactments does not create a basis for raising the group of monthly salaries for the position of assistant judge<sup>46</sup>, which limits the possibilities for raising remuneration. The level of responsibility of the position of assistant judge is lower than, for example, the content of the position of assistant prosecutor. Such an assessment of the responsibility of the assistant judge does not provide a sufficient basis for raising the monthly salary group.

The average remuneration of an assistant judge in 2024 accounted for only about 40% of the monthly salary of a district (city) judge. It is good practice to set the remuneration of an assistant judge as a percentage of a judge's salary, in some cases, for example in Estonia, even regulated by law. In view of this, the relatively not very high remuneration of a judge affects the ceiling of remuneration of an assistant judge, creating a situation in which the remuneration of an assistant judge is not competitive. Interviews with representatives of the judiciary also point to problems with the uncompetitiveness of remuneration, as well as the corresponding difficulty in attracting qualified employees.

## **3) A high coefficient of turnover of assistant judges significantly reduces the efficiency of courts**

The high turnover of assistant judges (reaching up to 41% per year in Riga courts<sup>47</sup>) means that judges have to regularly train new staff, which reduces productivity and hinders the processing of cases. In interviews, judges indicate that the duration of the office of assistant judge is usually one or two years, after which the assistant goes to other positions.

Such variability creates instability in the functioning of the justice system and has a significant impact on the workload on judges. At the same time, assistant judges play a vital role in the rejuvenation of the corps of judges, accounting for about 70% of the new judges. This testifies to the importance of the Institute of Assistant Judges in the development of the Latvian judicial

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<sup>43</sup> The assistant judge accepts visitors, their submissions, takes measures in connection with the preparation of cases for consideration at the hearing, as well as performs other tasks given by the judge.

<sup>44</sup> Information provided by the Court Administration – job descriptions of assistant judges.

<sup>45</sup> Cabinet Regulation No. 262 "Catalogue of Positions of State and Local Government Institutions, Procedures for the Classification of Positions and Development of a Description of Positions".

<sup>46</sup> Cabinet Regulation No. 262 of 26.04.2022, Catalogue of Positions of State and Local Government Institutions, Procedures for the Classification of Positions and Development of the Description of Positions, Paragraph 115.4.

<sup>47</sup> Annual Report of the Council for the Judiciary 2024. Available:

<https://www.tieslietupadome.lv/lv/media/9750/download?attachment>.

system, as well as highlights the need for a targeted staff development system, where the position of assistant judge would serve as a step towards a career as a judge.

#### **4) Judges specialising in land register cases – a deviation from the normal judicial process**

In 2019-2024, there was a decrease in the number of judges specialising in land register cases and an increase in the number of vacant posts. In 2019, out of 75 positions, 70 were filled, but in 2024, out of a total of 70 positions, only 57 were filled.

At the same time, compared to 2021, in 2024 the workload of judges specialising in land register cases increased significantly – during the year, the number of pending cases per judge increased by about 28%, reaching 4000 land registers and 1800 non-contentious cases per judge.

If a judge were to deal with these cases only during his or her working hours and the level of complexity of the cases were the same, an average of about 13.4 minutes would have to be spent on hearing one case<sup>48</sup>. In such circumstances, decision-making is more likely to be based on the knowledge and experience accumulated by the judge through a quick comparison of information and fact-checking, rather than on clarifying the facts of the case and making a reasoned decision. Judges who perform typical tasks of a judge are unlikely to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, fully analyse facts and arguments and use various legal methods. Such an accelerated agenda is unlikely to fully comply with the standards included in the classification of the profession of judge.

#### **5) Inadequacy of the duties of the clerk of court hearings with modern needs**

Maintaining the existing model of the position of the clerk of the court, without taking into account technological developments, hinders the modernisation of the judicial system and the sustainable management of human resources. In interviews with representatives of the judicial system, it has been emphasized that the duties of the position include only a technically feasible activity – activation and documentation of the recording of the hearing, which can be technologically replaced by automated solutions.

In practice, it has proved that the division of duties of judicial staff is unclear and has repeatedly pointed out the overlap of functions between court clerks and assistant judges. Also, according to the results of the survey conducted by PwC (see Annex 4), a significant problem from the judge's point of view is that the assistant judge devotes most of his working time to maintaining the TIS and entering data overlapping with the functions of the clerk of court hearings. At the moment, it is not uncommon for a situation to arise in which two secretaries actually work, since the assistant judge is not able to fully perform the functions of a legal assistant due to insufficient legal qualifications.

The provision of a clerk for each judge does not contribute to the efficiency of the trial and places an unnecessary burden on the budget of the courts, despite the actual intensity of the work. Interviews have indicated that by reviewing the number of clerks of court hearings, the attachment to a particular composition of the court, it would be possible to improve the efficiency of the work.

#### **6) The fragmented geographical location of judges creates unnecessary costs and limits the possibilities for specialisation of judges**

Currently, there are eight district (city) courts in Latvia, which operate in 45 courthouses. Similarly, six regional courts operate in nine courthouses (see Annexes 6 and 7 for the Courthouse Review). Several courts are located in six buildings, for example, one building houses Vidzeme District Court in Madona and Madona courthouse of Vidzeme Regional Court, thus the total number of court buildings in Latvia is 48.

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<sup>48</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers calculation.

Comparing the location of courts in Latvia with the location of courts in Estonia, the Netherlands and Finland, Latvia has the highest number of court buildings per 100 000 inhabitants – 2.58. Netherlands – 0.23, Finland – 0.94, Estonia – 1.46.

The maintenance of a separate courthouse is associated with additional costs – each courthouse has a court registry; security guards and cleaners are employed. In small courthouses, the cost of administrative support in relation to the number of judges is disproportionately high. For example, in the Valka courthouse of the Vidzeme District Courthouse, where only three judge posts are provided, the costs of security guards and cleaners per one judge's post amount to 9895 euros per year. In the Rezekne courthouse of the Latgale District Court, where 9 judge positions are planned, these costs amount to 4679 euros per year. Comparatively, in courthouses with at least 10 judges, similar administrative costs per judge may not reach as much as EUR 2000 per year.

In courthouses with a small number of judges, the area of premises available to judges is disproportionately large (e.g. 474.2 m<sup>2</sup> per judge at the Kurzeme District Court in Saldus). About a fifth of courthouses have only three judge seats. Such a situation indicates the inefficiency of the use of premises and leads to unnecessarily high maintenance costs of courthouses. Consequently, there are grounds for reviewing the need for such a vast physical infrastructure and considering the concentration of judicial posts in larger administrative centres.

More centralised courthouses could significantly improve not only costs but would also make it much easier for the court to optimise and mobilise court resources and provide better opportunities for specialisation of judges. This would make it possible to significantly increase the speed of the administration of justice and the quality of court decisions. An analysis of court statistics<sup>49</sup> shows that in Latvia it has been possible to ensure the specialisation of judges in courts of general jurisdiction only in one of the main types of cases – civil cases. Only civil cases have been viewed by 153, or 49% of judges. For the most part,<sup>50</sup> only 48, or 15%, of judges have considered criminal and execution cases. More than a third of judges (112 or 36%) have not been able to specialise even in the basic form of cases, as they have had to deal with administrative offence cases, civil and criminal cases.

By comparison, for example, in the Netherlands, a reform of the court map was carried out in 2013, one of the objectives of which was to improve the distribution of human and financial resources among judicial districts, as well as to ensure a stricter specialisation of judges, which can only be achieved in courts with a higher number of judges.

## **4.2. Goal**

Establish a model of judicial human resource management and work organisation that promotes effective cooperation between judges and court staff in order to achieve maximum results in the judicial process with optimal resources.

## **4.3. Description of the solution**

### **Review the basic principles of the human resources management policy of the judicial system**

It is necessary to strive for a smaller, but very highly qualified, efficient corps of judges, who are remunerated to the public in accordance with their status and role, and who are supported by highly competent lawyers specialising in certain issues. In a survey of judges, when asked how your workload would potentially change if you had a highly qualified assistant judge, 70% of judges replied that cases could be handled 10-30% faster. Consequently, one of the steps is to increase the scope of responsibility for the position of assistant judge by establishing that the main function of the assistant judge is to ensure the performance of those procedural and

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<sup>49</sup> Court Information System data for the period from 2021 to 2024

<sup>50</sup> For these judges, 9% of the number of cases have also been administrative offense cases and 2% have been civil cases.

organizational actions related to judicial proceedings, the performance of which does not require the qualification or competence of a judge.

Such a redistribution of functions provides for an increase in the productivity of judges, allowing judges to focus on tasks directly related to the administration of justice. In the long term, this will create the conditions for a proportional optimisation of the number of judges, while maintaining a high quality and efficiency of the court's work. In order to successfully implement such a redistribution of functions, it will be necessary to implement change management measures, explaining the need to transform the model of cooperation between the judge and assistant judges, ensuring mutual understanding and strengthening the capacity of the parties involved to qualitatively implement the duties of the office. This requires sufficient time – typically one year, for example, for making changes to job descriptions, selecting qualified assistant judges, training and entering into the work. It is desirable to pilot the new approach in institutions that agree to implement a pilot project.

### Create differentiated positions of assistant judges

The course of action of the Council for the Judiciary "Optimal and effective staffing model of the judicial system" pays particular attention to strengthening the position of assistant judge in the future. According to the observations of the Working Group on Strengthening the Efficiency of Courts, information expressed in interviews and discussed in discussions, there are two possible scenarios for the further development of the Assistant Judge Institute:

Option 1	Option 2
<p><b>Increase in remuneration for all assistant judges</b></p> <p>Not optimal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High cost - an additional year of around EUR 2.4 million would be required.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Create different positions of assistant judges</b></p> <p>The scenario envisages a distinction between the following positions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Assistant Judge – with a bachelor's degree in law or studies in law;</li> <li>2) Court lawyer – with a master's degree in law;</li> <li>3) Court Research Assistant (district (city court)/regional court counsellor) – with a master's degree or doctorate in law;</li> <li>4) Assistant judge with existing status and remuneration.</li> </ol>

In the first scenario, an increase in remuneration for all assistant judges is associated with high costs. Discussions with the judiciary have also acknowledged that a more optimal scenario would be a differentiation of the position of assistant judge.

In order to implement the proposed changes to the Institute of Assistant Judges, it would be necessary to:

**1) To express Article 99 of the Law on the Judiciary as follows:**

"(1) An assistant judge shall prepare a case for consideration, conduct legal research, analyse sources of law, participate in ensuring the examination of the case, prepare procedural decisions and draft documents, develop draft descriptive and motive parts of the judgment in accordance with the instructions of the judge, prepare draft documents of other documents."

**2) To supplement the Law "On the Judiciary" with a new 99. Article 1 "Lawyer for the Court" shall read as follows:**

"A court lawyer finds, analyses, interprets and applies legal norms and other sources of law, develops legal texts, provides legal assistance to the judge, conducts research on certain legal issues, performs other legal activities. Decisions are taken in cases where there is no dispute. Examines requests and applications for corroboration of immovable property, takes a decision on granting or disregarding the request for corroboration"

- 3) **To supplement the Law "On the Judiciary" with a new 99. <sup>Article 2</sup> "Scientific Analytical Adviser" shall read as follows:**

"The scientific analytical adviser performs scientific research work, participates in the development of draft rulings in complex cases, conducts analysis of case law, evaluates changes in regulatory enactments."

- 4) **To make amendments to Paragraph 115 of Cabinet Regulation No. 262 "Catalogue of Positions of State and Local Government Authorities, Procedures for the Classification of Positions and Development of the Description of Positions" in accordance with the wording of the Law.**

6. table. The recommended model for financing the positions of assistant judge, court lawyer and scientific analytical adviser, while maintaining the positions of judge filled on 31.12.2024.

Post	Education	Monthly salary group	Remuneration (gross) per month	Share of judge's salary <sup>51</sup> (%)	Number of posts	Share of the number of assistant judges (%)	Cost per year <sup>52</sup>
Assistant Judge	Bachelor's degree or study in law	10.	€1980	50%	413	67%	€12 413 293
Court lawyer	Master's degree in law	11.	€2475	60%	130	21%	€4 884 165
Scientific Analytical Adviser (District (City) Court Counsel)	Master's or doctoral degree in law	12.	€2770	70%	8	1%	€336 510
Scientific Analytical Counsel (Regional Court Counsel)	Master's or doctoral degree in law	12.	€2970	75%	6	1%	€270 508
Assistant judge with current status	Higher education and experience in court	9.	€1638	41%	56	9%	€1 392 431
<b>Together</b>							<b>€19 296 907<sup>53</sup></b>

Funding for the positions of assistant judge, court lawyer and scientific analytical adviser has been achieved by reducing the number of posts for judges and the posts of clerk of court hearings under their jurisdiction, as well as by using the funding available for the current number of posts of assistant judges (see Table 7). The scenario assumes that the number of judge posts is reduced to the 477 judges actually employed. All the vacant positions of judge on 31.12.2024 (12 judges of the appellate instance and 57 judges of first instance, 13 of whom with specialisation in land register cases) are abolished, along with the abolition of the position of judge, the post of clerk of court hearings with jurisdiction is also abolished. It is expected that 14 of the existing judges specialising in land register cases would remain working on land register and non-contentious cases, with the remaining posts being taken over by the court's lawyers. Other judges specialising in land register cases would be reoriented to work in courts of first instance of general jurisdiction. The introduction of the new Assistant Judge Institute would save around €68,636/year.

<sup>51</sup> The monthly salary of a judge of the district (city) court is EUR 3959 as of 1 January 2025.

<sup>52</sup> The total annual costs include the employer's monthly costs for one job unit multiplied by 12 months and the number of job units, as well as vacation allowance calculated as 30% of the monthly salary multiplied by the number of job units.

<sup>53</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers calculations.

7. table. Sources of funding for the positions of assistant judge, court lawyer and scientific analytical adviser.

Source of funding	Remuneration (gross) per month	Number of posts	Cost per year <sup>54</sup>
Current available funding for assistant judges	€1980	554	€13 775 121
Savings from the elimination of judge posts in district (city) courts – judges of general jurisdiction	€3959	44	€2 664 295
Savings from the elimination of judge posts in district (city) courts – judges specialising in land register cases	<del>€3959</del>	13	€781 269
Savings from the elimination of judge posts in regional courts	€4750	12	€865 260
Savings from the elimination of the posts of the clerk of the court	€1241	69	€1 299 596
<b>Together</b>			<b>€19 365 543<sup>55</sup></b>

The most significant fiscal impact in the human resources context of the judicial system is precisely related to the number of judges. The budget of the judicial system is planned according to the determined, not the actual number of judges. Since some of the posts have not been filled for a long time, the funds earmarked for remuneration are not fully used. These funds are used to cover court costs or are returned to the state budget<sup>56</sup>. The number of assistant judges and clerks of court hearings is closely related to the number of judges, so any change in the number of judges also affects these court staff. This also applies to the financing of these positions.

Given that some judge posts are not filled for a long time and that around 28% of judges may retire in the coming years<sup>57</sup>, it is important to consider different scenarios for a reduction in the number of judges and their fiscal impact. Below summarizes the costs associated with the implementation of the differentiated assistant judge institute described above in various scenarios of reduction in the number of judges. The cost comparison is made in relation to the current situation, in which the existing number of judge posts is maintained (546), the position of assistant judge is not differentiated. The scenarios compared include: maintaining the number of existing judicial posts; the reduction of the posts of judge to the number of posts specified in Decision No 20 of the Council for the Judiciary of 14 March 2025; reduction of the number of judge posts to the number of judge posts filled on 31.12.2024; reducing the number of judge posts by 10%, 15%, 20% of the current number of posts.

<sup>54</sup> The total annual costs include the employer's monthly costs for one job unit multiplied by 12 months and the number of job units, as well as vacation allowance calculated as 30% of the monthly salary multiplied by the number of job units.

<sup>55</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers calculations.

<sup>56</sup> State control. "Access and development of human resources in Latvian courts". Available at: [https://lrvk.gov.lv/lv/getrevisionfile/29740-YyB8Pd\\_bKgizFid2Q1YedWrpbraPIED.pdf](https://lrvk.gov.lv/lv/getrevisionfile/29740-YyB8Pd_bKgizFid2Q1YedWrpbraPIED.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

8. table. The cost of the institute of differentiated assistant judges per year depending on the number of posts of the judge.

Scenario	Number of judicial posts abolished	Cost per year	Difference against current costs (euro) <sup>58</sup>	Difference against current costs (%)
Maintenance of the current number of judicial posts	-	€63 983 877	+ €8 300 363	+ 14.9%
Reduction of the number of judicial posts to the one recommended by the Judicial Council Decision No. 20 of 14.03.2025	30	€60 319 610	+ €4 363 096	+ 8.3%
Maintenance of the number of judge posts filled as of 31.12.2024	69	€55 614 879	- €68 635	- 0.1%
Reduction of the number of judges by 10% of the actual number of judges	117	€49 739 999	- €5 943 515	- 10.7%
Reducing the number of judges by 15% of the actual number of judges	140	<del>€46 943 854</del>	- €8 739 663	- 15.7%
Reduction of the number of judges by 20% of the actual number of judges	165	€43 887 661	- €11 795 853	- 21.2%

<sup>58</sup> The current costs have been obtained by maintaining the current number of posts for district (city) courts and regional court judges (405 at first instance, 141 at appeal), the number of assistant judges (554) and the number of clerks at court hearings (393). Assuming that the average remuneration of an assistant judge is EUR 1638, as well as applying the SSIA at 23.59% of the monthly salary and a holiday allowance of 30% of the monthly salary, the current costs of assistant judges are EUR 13 775 121 / year, the costs of judges - EUR 34 506 341 / year, the costs of court clerks - EUR 7 402 051 / year. The total cost is EUR 55 683 513 / year.

## To look for solutions to increase the capacity of the clerk of court hearings

### **1) Transformation of the post of registrar of the court hearing into an administrative support function**

The scenario envisages a future transformation of the duties of the clerk of the court hearing, giving him the functions of an administrative assistant to a judge, thus adapting this role to the needs of modern court work. The functions of the position in the scenario are oriented towards general administrative support for judges, without being tied to a specific composition of the court. This would facilitate the use of staff in line with the court's current needs and provide the possibility to adjust the content of the post, reducing overlapping work.

The scenario envisages that as technological capabilities develop, the need for manual involvement in the provision of court proceedings will be reduced, as a result of which the role of the position may be significantly redefined while optimizing personnel resources.

### **2) Clarification of the roles of the clerk and assistant judge**

The scenario provides for the definition of clear areas of responsibility between the assistant judge and the clerk of the hearing, avoiding duplication of functions and contributing to a more efficient organisation of work in the court. The scenario envisages defining the position of assistant judge as "legal assistant", more accurately reflecting the content of the position and emphasizing the need for legal qualifications.

In order to strengthen legal support for judges, the scenario envisages strengthening the position of assistant judge as legal support, thus clearly separating legal and administrative functions in the day-to-day work of the court. Such an approach would improve the prestige of the position, clarify qualification requirements and facilitate the development of an appropriate remuneration policy.

### **3) Developing more effective models of cooperation between judges, judicial assistants and court clerks**

The scenario envisages transforming the court's internal cooperation models by introducing an approach in which decisions on resource management are made by the administrative management of the court, reducing centralisation and top-down solutions.

These issues should be addressed at court level by setting up targeted cooperation groups to organise the handling of different categories of cases as effectively as possible and to ensure an optimal distribution of the workload between judges, judicial assistants and other support staff.

### **4) Flexible organisation of the hearing clerk's work**

The scenario envisages that in the future, the functions of the clerk of the court are no longer tied to a specific composition of the court. Such a model would allow for more flexibility in the use of staff, allowing the secretary's resources to be used in accordance with the current flow of cases and the workload of the court, as well as improving the efficiency of work.

### **5) Automatic compilation of minutes of court hearings and refusal of written transcription of audio minutes in civil cases**

The scenario would assess the available technological solutions (or their development) and introduce the compilation of automated court minutes (transcripts) based on the use of an automatic voice recognition system.

Currently, the necessary technical solutions for the centralised distribution and coordination of work are lacking, so the scenario envisages that automated recording of court hearings will allow for the preparation of transcripts of court hearings both in real time and offline, greatly

facilitating the work of court clerks and ensuring more efficient documentation of court proceedings.<sup>59</sup>

In a survey conducted by PwC, the judges have indicated that since the introduction of audio protocols, the participation of the clerk of the hearing in the hearing (viewed in conjunction with other organizational work related to the conduct of the hearing) should be waived since there is no need to draw up a written protocol in addition to the recording of the hearing, thus performing double work.

The scenario envisages considering abandoning the possible rewriting/preparation of audio protocols, limiting itself to making audio recordings. Such a solution could facilitate the work of the composition of the court, as there would be no need to correct the protocols. The judge makes notes on what happened at the hearing, while the participants in the proceedings would be informed of the progress of the case, and the audio recording would be available to all parties involved, if necessary. At the moment, written audio minutes are prepared only for those parties who were not present at the hearing.

#### **6) Integration of the position of clerk of the court hearing with other court support services**

Taking into account technological progress, the scenario envisages that in the future the post of clerk of the court hearing could be integrated into the court registry. At the same time, the remuneration of these posts should be reviewed in the light of the scope of additional duties. For example, the preparation and sending of notifications and summons in the TIS system can be automated using artificial intelligence tools. This would free up financial and human resources that could be directed to the provision of qualified legal assistants, thereby strengthening the quality of court work.

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<sup>59</sup> For example, Tilde (2024). Estonian Courts shift to automated transcription with Salme. Available: <https://tilde.ai/asr-solution-for-estonian-courts/>.

Assistant Judge	Court lawyer	Scientific Analytical Advisor (counsel to the district (city) court and counsel to the regional court)	Assistant judge with current status
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Conducts legal research and analyses sources of law;</li> <li>2) Participates in ensuring the examination of the case;</li> <li>3) In accordance with the instructions of the judge, prepare procedural decisions and draft documents;</li> <li>4) prepare a draft of the descriptive part of the judgment, in accordance with the instructions of the judge and, under his or her leadership, develop a draft of the motives part of the judgment;</li> <li>5) Provide the judge with comments on the course of the hearing;</li> <li>6) Prepare draft responses to submissions, complaints, proposals, applications and requests;</li> <li>7) Prepare draft requests for various institutions.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) examine requests and submissions for corroboration of immovable property, take a decision to satisfy the request for corroboration or leave it without progress;</li> <li>2) Takes decisions in non-contentious matters;</li> <li>3) Provides support to the judge in the examination of complex cases;</li> <li>4) Conducts research on certain legal issues;</li> <li>5) Performs other actions.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Analyse case law and prepare analytical summaries;</li> <li>2) Performs scientific research work necessary for ensuring the functioning of the court;</li> <li>3) Provides support in the development of draft rulings in complex cases;</li> <li>4) Follow changes in laws and regulations and practice and ensure communication thereon, as well as, if necessary, participate in the development of laws and regulations.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Current responsibilities;</li> <li>2) Provides support to court lawyers performing the duties of former judges specialising in land register cases, including former judges.</li> </ol>

## Save state budget funds by optimizing the network of courthouses

### **A network of courthouses located in the administrative centres of the country**

Abandoning a fragmented network of courthouses would make it possible to reduce the costs associated with maintaining courthouses, strengthen the uniform distribution of cases at the level of the entire district (city) court and make it possible to develop the specialisation of judges, following the recommendations of the European Advisory Council of Judges on the specialisation of judges<sup>60</sup>.

As a matter of priority, it is recommended to abandon those district (city) courthouses that meet the following criteria:

- significantly higher costs per judge's post than the average for all courthouses (average maintenance costs per judge's post in 2024 – €23,710);
- in the courthouse, the duties of the office are performed by a very small number of judges, for example, three or less;
- the ratio of the number of judges to the number of inhabitants of the respective administrative territory is higher than the average indicator in Latvia – 17 per 100 000 inhabitants (for example, in Valka municipality it is the highest in Latvia, where it is 40, it is 135% higher compared to the average indicator in Latvia).
- The area of the courthouse premises in the administrative centre of the region is sufficient to allow the places of execution of the offices of judges of the closed courthouses to be transferred there.

Positive benefit:

- optimise existing space resources by area in the largest courthouses;
- reduced burden of administrative support costs on the performer of the functions of the main activity – for example, court registry, security guard;
- developed specialization of judges.

Closing courthouses with a maximum of three judges and moving the performance of individual judges' duties to larger courthouses could save a bit over one million euros per year, which could be used either to adapt central courthouses to a larger number of judges or to maintain courthouses.

Attached is an overview of the courthouses that would be liquidated in accordance with the above criteria (see Annex 6). It should be taken into account that the calculations of the area of the premises available to the judge are based on the total area of the courthouses, since detailed information is not available on the distribution of premises into offices, the number of offices or the functionality of the premises.

Summarizing the criteria for evaluating the efficient use of courthouses, an assessment of the usefulness of maintaining the courthouse has been developed (see Annex 7). The assessment does not currently take into account the fact that the courthouse is used for the placement of various judicial units, for example, part of the district (city) court buildings also houses regional court units.

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<sup>60</sup> Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/16807477d9>

The comparative analysis of courthouses provides a data-based justification for assessing the usefulness of the use of courthouses, allowing to identify structural units to be retained and priority optimization opportunities.

## 5. Attachments

### 1. Annex. Recommendations for changes in the areas of responsibility of the Council for the Judiciary when amending laws and regulations

Responsibilities for the management of the judiciary	Responsibilities of the Latvian Council of Justice	Responsible authority, official outside the Council for the Judiciary (in the box, the competent official or authority whose powers in this matter are proposed to be changed)	Possible amendments to the Law on the Judiciary
Protecting the independence of the judiciary	Follows from the principles		To supplement Act 89. <sup>Article 1</sup> after the word "who" with "ensures the protection of the independence of the judiciary"
Development of judicial policies and strategies	Participating <sup>61</sup>	<b>Ministry of Justice</b>	Replace Act 89.in Article <sup>1</sup> , the words "in the development of the policy and strategy of the justice system" with "develop a strategy for the justice system"
Determination of the number of judges in court	Yes <sup>62</sup>	On the proposal <b>of the Minister of Justice</b> in the Court of First Instance and Appeal;	Delete from the third paragraph of Article 32 of the Law the words "on the proposal of the Minister for Justice"
Reorganization of the district (city) court, transfer of judge, replacement of judge	Yes <sup>63</sup>	The Council for the Judiciary on <b>the proposal</b> of the Minister for Justice	Delete from Act 33. <sup>Article 4</sup> , first paragraph and 73. <sup>2</sup> , 73. <sup>the</sup> words of Articles 3, 75, 77 "on a proposal from the Minister for Justice"
<b>Organisation of the career of judges</b>			
Dismissal of a judge	A proposal shall be made if a judge is dismissed from office because of his state of health or because he or she has received a negative opinion in the assessment of professional activity <sup>64</sup>	The Saeima on the proposal <b>of the Minister of Justice (for a judge of a district (city) or regional court)</b> or the President of the Supreme Court (for a senator), if dismissed	Replace the words "on the proposal of the Minister for Justice" in the first paragraph of Article 81 of the Law with "on the proposal of the Council for the Judiciary"

<sup>61</sup> 89 of the Law "On the Judiciary"<sup>Article 1</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> Sections 32(3), 39(2), 48(2) of the Law on the Judiciary.

<sup>63</sup> 33 of the Law "On the Judiciary", <sup>Article 4</sup>(1).

<sup>64</sup> Section 81, Paragraph one of the Law On the Judiciary.

Responsibilities for the management of the judiciary	Responsibilities of the Latvian Council of Justice	Responsible authority, official outside the Council for the Judiciary (in the box, the competent official or authority whose powers in this matter are proposed to be changed)	Possible amendments to the Law on the Judiciary
		of the judge's own volition or due to appointment to a new position <sup>65</sup>	
Granting of leave to a judge	–	<b>Court administration</b> <sup>66</sup>	Delete Act 107. <sup>Article 1</sup> , Paragraph two (5).in paragraph 1, the word "issued" shall be <sup>67</sup>
<b>Organisation and financing of the work of the courts</b>			
Leading authority in the administration of courts	–	<b>Ministry of Justice</b> <sup>68</sup>	In the first paragraph of Article 107 of the Law, the words "the leading public administration body in the administration of justice" shall be deleted. To supplement Act 89. Article <sup>1</sup> with a new sentence to read as follows: "The Council for the Judiciary shall supervise and organise the administrative work of the courts and its work shall be ensured by the Secretariat of the Council for the Judiciary (alternative: the Administration of the Courts to avoid the risk of overlapping functions).."
Internal regulatory enactments on issues of organizational management of courts	–	<b>Ministry of Justice</b> <sup>69</sup>	Delete paragraph 1 of the second paragraph of Article 107 of the Law. To supplement Act 89. <sup>Article 11</sup> with a new sentence in the following wording: "The Council for the Judiciary shall issue internal regulatory enactments on issues of organizational management of district (city) courts, regional courts."

<sup>65</sup> Section 81, Paragraph one of the Law "On the Judiciary".

<sup>66</sup> 107 of the Law "On the Judiciary".<sup>Article 1</sup>, Paragraph two 51.

<sup>67</sup> It is necessary to assess whether the issuance of such an order corresponds at all to the status of the independence of the judge. If appropriate, then the task falls within the competence of the president of the court.

<sup>68</sup> Section 107, Paragraph one of the Law On the Judiciary.

<sup>69</sup> Section 107, Paragraph two, Clause 1 of the Law On the Judiciary.

Responsibilities for the management of the judiciary	Responsibilities of the Latvian Council of Justice	Responsible authority, official outside the Council for the Judiciary (in the box, the competent official or authority whose powers in this matter are proposed to be changed)	Possible amendments to the Law on the Judiciary
Preparation and submission of a budget request	Gives an opinion <sup>70</sup>	<b>The Court Administration and the Ministry of Justice in relation to the Court of First Instance and the Court of Appeal.</b> Supreme Court independently. <sup>71</sup>	To express the law "On the Judiciary" 50. The third paragraph of Article 2 in the new wording "The Council for the Judiciary shall approve the draft budget request for district (city) courts and regional courts, which has been prepared by the Judicial Administration. A budget request for district (city) courts and regional courts, accompanied by the opinion of the Council for the Judiciary, shall be submitted by the Administration of Justice to the Ministry of Justice."
Decides on the transfer of a vacant judge's position within the territory of the court's operation	Yes <sup>72</sup>	<b>On the proposal of the Minister of Justice</b>	Replace Act 89.in Article 11, paragraph eleven, the words "on a proposal from the Minister for Justice" with "on a proposal from the Council for the Judiciary"

<sup>70</sup> Law "On the Judiciary" 50. Article 2, third paragraph.

<sup>71</sup> Law "On the Judiciary" 50. Article 2, third and fourth paragraphs.

<sup>72</sup> 89 of the Law "On the Judiciary" Article 11 (11).

## 2. Annex. Responsibility for the position of the area represented by the members of the Council for the Judiciary for improving performance in the institution decided by the Council for the Judiciary

Member of the Council for the Judiciary	Justice <sup>73</sup> policy	District (city) courts and regional court proceedings/deadline issues	Organization of the work of district (city) courts and regional courts (court administration and budgeting)	Giving an opinion on the candidate for the post of President of the Supreme Court	Provision of an opinion on the candidate for the position of a judge of the Constitutional Court	Advancing candidates for the post of Attorney General	Activities of the Academy of Justice
President of the Supreme Court	Responsible	In the performance of official duties, indirect monitoring of the quality of judicial proceedings is carried out		Replies (if does not abstain)			Responsible
President of the Constitutional Court					Responsible		
Minister for Justice	Responsible	Political responsibility		Political responsibility	Political responsibility	Political responsibility	
Chairman of the Legal Committee of the Saeima	Responsible	Political responsibility		Political responsibility	Political responsibility	Political responsibility	
Attorney General		Do not answer, but are interested				Replies (if does not abstain)	Responsible
Chairman of the Latvian Council of Sworn Advocates		Do not answer, but are interested					
Chairman of the Latvian Council of Sworn Notaries		Do not answer, but are interested					
Chairman of the Latvian Council of Sworn Bailiffs		Do not answer, but are interested					
Judge elected by the plenum of the Supreme Court	Responsible	In the performance of official duties, indirect monitoring of the quality of judicial proceedings is carried out		Responsible			Responsible
Four district (city) judges elected by the Judicial Conference	Responsible	Responsible	Responsible				Responsible
Two regional court judges elected by the Conference of Judges	Responsible	Responsible	Responsible				Responsible
<b>Missing competences:</b>							

<sup>73</sup> Excluding persons belonging to the judicial system.

Representatives of the presidents of the courts (may be among those elected by the Conference of Judges)	Responsible	Responsible	Responsible
Representatives of court staff			Responsible
Specialists in administrative matters			Responsible

### 3. Annex. Recommendations on how to optimise existing internal and legal procedures/IT solutions/HR investments to facilitate a more efficient functioning of the justice system on a day-to-day basis.

#### Processes

Accumulated judicial data	Result
Introduce a permanent accounting of time worked by hours or regularly carry out measurements of the time consumed.	Improved scheduling of working hours and management of judges' workloads.
Perform "data cleaning" to eliminate inconsistencies in wording and get rid of redundant or unclear case categories and actions by ensuring more accurate data processing and analysis.	More accurate and reliable statistical analysis that improves decision-making and judicial planning.
Regularly review performance indicators and abandon those that are not used or are not useful for achieving goals.	Improved consistency of indicators and more effective management of the results of court work.
The judicial administration must establish in the law the obligation to monitor the achievement of the typical efficiency indicators of the courts, identifying deviations from the planned and the right to in-depth analysis of the causes of deviations. The Court Administration to publish periodic reports on the results of the analysis of the work of the courts.	Increased accountability for results and strengthened a data-driven approach to improving the work of the courts.
Management of time limits for handling cases	Result
Improve technological solutions and systems so that the scoring of points awarded to cases can be provided automatically in the TIS system.	Reduced manual work and the likelihood of errors, ensuring consistent and efficient application of case weighting in all courts.

## People

Personnel management policy	Result
<p>To carry out the redistribution of decision-making competences by creating the position of a court lawyer and transferring certain functions of judges to it.</p>	<p>The capacity of judges specialising in land registry cases has been freed up and specialisation has been expanded, allowing judges to focus on more complex civil cases while maintaining efficient handling of land registers and non-contentious cases.</p>
<p>Develop the next generation of judges, legal and administrative support staff by introducing a work-based training system, creating the position of court lawyer and scientific adviser classified at a higher level, thus promoting the development of competences and progress to higher-level positions, including the position of judge.</p>	<p>Sustainable professional succession in the justice system, structured career growth and retention of qualified staff.</p>
<p>Review the approach to the selection of judges, complementing it with targeted methods of attracting candidates, such as recruitment, invitation to apply for a position or becoming a court lawyer.</p>	<p>A wider and better range of applicants, ensuring the capacity of the judicial system in the long term, especially in view of the upcoming replacement of generations of judges.</p>
<p>Increase the remuneration of judges of first instance by around 20% so that it is proportionate to the responsibility of the post and competitive at regional level.</p>	<p>Increased competitiveness of judges in attracting and retaining judges, especially in view of the expected increase in vacancies.</p>
The process of planning the working time of a judge	Result
<p>Identify the reasons why judges work more than five hours above normal working hours per week and develop a strategy to reduce congestion</p>	<p>Reduced drop in judge productivity due to burnout or fatigue.</p>
<p>Periodically (at least every five years) to carry out measurements of the time taken to review categories of cases in order to verify the compliance of the net time specified in the Case Weighing Model with actual practice.</p>	<p>A more accurate and evidence-based model for weighing cases, which ensures a more objective assessment of the workload of judges and more efficient planning of resources.</p>
<p>Include in the monthly working time accounting tables information on the number of hours of study, participation in self-government organizations and time spent on the performance of administrative duties.</p>	<p>More accurate information on the workload of judges outside the hearing of cases, which allows for timely identification of overload and improved resource planning.</p>
<p>To optimize the process of transferring cases or to provide in the regulatory framework for the possibility of hearing cases in any area, informing the parties in advance of such a possibility and, if necessary, providing remote hearings.</p>	<p>Reduced length of proceedings and more efficient levelling of the judicial workload between regions, while maintaining access to the process for the parties.</p>

Organization of work and efficiency of the use of human resources	Result
<p><b>Develop a court development strategy, within the framework of which the established performance indicators could be regularly discussed at meetings of court judges or individual development negotiations with the president of the court, adapting them to the needs of the particular institution.</b></p>	<p>More targeted development of the court, better traceability of results and greater responsibility for improving the functioning of a particular judicial authority.</p>
<p><b>To assess the performance of the judicial authorities, introduce a regular analysis using specific statistical indicators, such as the average time to take a decision in enforcement cases, the number of cases heard by a judge and a civil servant, the number of requests for interpretation of a decision or the correction of errors or omissions.</b></p>	<p>An objective and comparable assessment of the work of the courts is ensured, which allows to identify efficiency problems.</p>
<p><b>Introduce three efficiency criteria for evaluating the budgeting process, broken down by stakeholders: citizens, users and taxpayers.</b></p>	<p>Transparency of the budget planning process and compliance with the interests of different groups of society is ensured.</p>
<p><b>Establish clear definitions and data elements in the judicial framework for the preparation of the assessment, such as the definition of the time for hearing a case, the calculation of resources in full-time equivalents, the number of weighted applications and the on-the-spot quality check of quantitative criteria.</b></p>	<p>A comparable, transparent and evidence-based analysis of the effectiveness of judicial work has been provided.</p>
Organization of work and efficiency of the use of human resources	Result
<p><b>Develop a court development strategy, within the framework of which the established performance indicators could be regularly discussed at meetings of court judges or individual development negotiations with the president of the court, adapting them to the needs of the particular institution.</b></p>	<p>More targeted development of the court, better traceability of results and greater responsibility for improving the functioning of a particular judicial authority.</p>
<p><b>To assess the performance of the judicial authorities, introduce a regular analysis using specific statistical indicators, such as the average time to take a decision in enforcement cases, the number of cases heard by a judge and a civil servant, the number of requests for interpretation of a decision or the correction of errors or omissions.</b></p>	<p>An objective and comparable assessment of the work of the courts is ensured, which allows to identify efficiency problems.</p>
<p><b>Establish clear definitions and data elements in the judicial framework for the preparation of the assessment, such as the definition of the time for hearing a case, the calculation of resources in full-time equivalents, the number of weighted applications and the on-the-spot quality check of quantitative criteria.</b></p>	<p>A comparable, transparent and evidence-based analysis of the effectiveness of judicial work has been provided.</p>

## Effective information communication technologies and digitalisation of the judicial process

Effective information communication technologies and digitalisation of the judicial process	Result
<b>Introduce systematic and regular training of judges and court staff for the development of digital skills and the use of the e-case system.</b>	Increased digital competence of employees, improved usability and efficiency of the e-case system.
<b>Introduce new technologies and artificial intelligence solutions in those judicial functions where the law establishes objective criteria, for example in the handling of non-contentious cases, as well as use AI to automate repetitive administrative tasks, such as document preparation, data entry, recording of court hearings.</b>	Reduced workload on judges, accelerated handling of cases and more efficient use of resources, while maintaining the quality of decisions.

## 4. Annex. Summary of the survey on the workload of court staff.

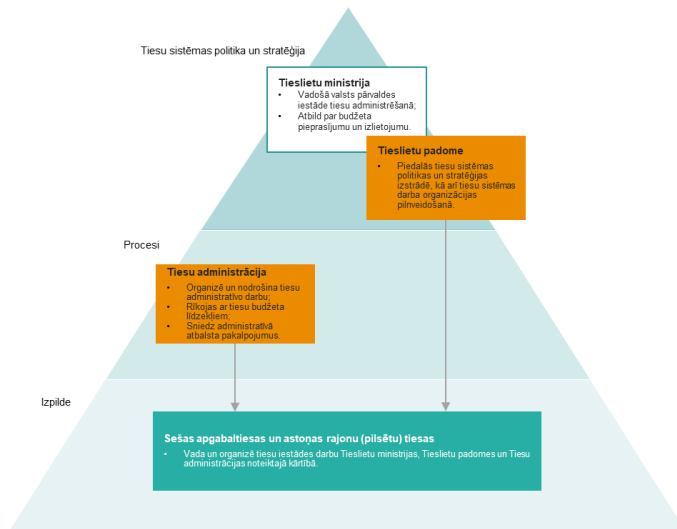
PwC's survey on the workload of first and appellate court judges and court staff and the possibilities for improving the efficiency of the work of the courts took place from 2 to 18 April 2025. The survey included questions on the following topics: the distribution of working time for the performance of various duties; self-assessment of the workload and reasons for recycling; identification of unnecessary and duplicative actions; evaluation of the model of cooperation between judges and assistant judges / clerks of court hearings and recommendations for improvement; proposals to improve the efficiency of judicial work and institutional changes in the justice system.

The survey was filled out by about 32% of the actual number of judges, 29% of the actual number of assistant judges, 18% of the actual number of court clerks. A detailed number of respondents by judicial authority is provided in the table below.

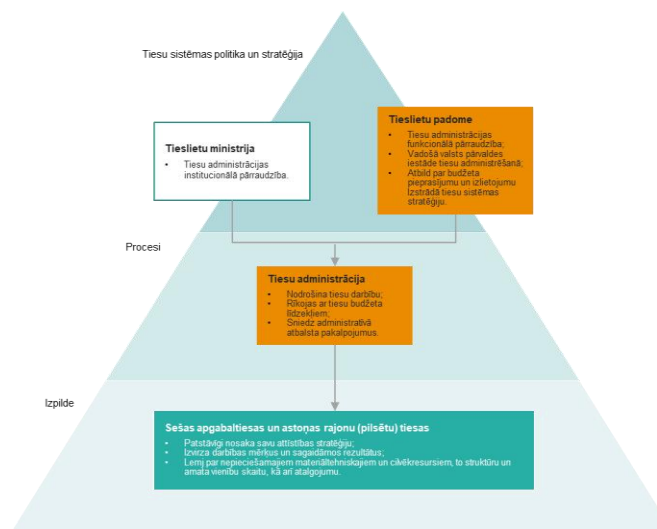
Judicial authority	Referee	Assistant Judge	Registrar of the hearing	Another court employee	Together	Percentage
Administrative Regional Court	8	5	0	1	14	3%
Riga Regional Court	10	21	6	1	38	9%
Courland Regional Court	3	6	2	4	15	3%
Latgale Regional Court	6	4	0	3	13	3%
Vidzeme Regional Court	6	3	1	1	11	2%
Zemgale Regional Court	5	7	3	1	16	4%
Administrative District Court	11	9	8	7	35	8%
Economic Court	5	6	1	1	13	3%
Riga City Court	35	36	26	6	103	23%
Riga District Court	16	12	9	7	44	10%
Kurzeme District Court	12	16	3	8	39	9%
Latgale District Court	16	11	5	3	35	8%
Vidzeme District Court	8	6	1	2	17	4%
Zemgale District Court	13	16	7	12	48	11%
<b>Together</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 5. Annex. Comparison of the management models of the judicial system.

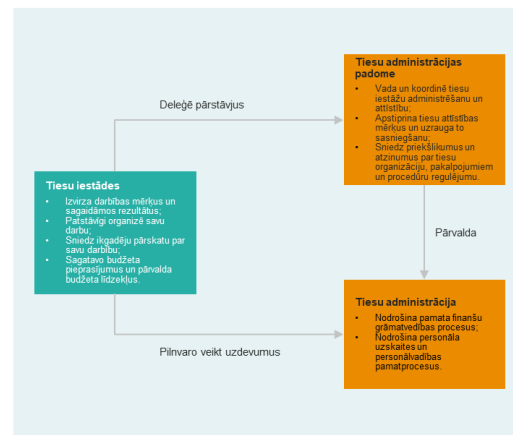
Pašreizējā situācija



Nākotnes situācija, TP pārņemot funkcijas no Tieslietu ministrijas, Tiesu administrācija funkcionālā Tieslietu padomes padotībā



Tiesu, Tiesu administrācijas padomes un Tiesu administrācijas sadarbības modelis salīdzināmajās valstīs



## 6. Annex. An overview of courthouse optimization options.

Recommendation on how to optimise the use of courthouses: close courthouses with no more than three posts, except in certain cases where it is recommended to consolidate the posts of a judge in a single courthouse for the purpose of economic use. The positions of a judge are not abolished – the place of execution of the office of judges is transferred to another courthouse. The total savings if all economically unprofitable courthouses are closed is €1,058,720 (in 2023 prices).

Opportunities for optimizing courthouses in the Kurzeme Judicial District.

Judicial district	Courthouse	Number of judicial posts (2025) <sup>74</sup>	Annual maintenance costs (2023) <sup>75</sup>	Area per judge, m2 <sup>76</sup>	Area to the judge when transferring the place of execution of the office of judges, m2	Recommendations
Kurzeme Judicial District	Kurzeme Regional Court	13	€364 830	252.6	252.6	
	Kurzeme District Courts in Saldus	3	€139 052	474.2	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to the Kuldiga courthouse
	Kurzeme District Court in Liepaja (land registry issues)	4	€97 141	127.3	127.3	
	Kurzeme District Court in Kuldiga	5	€119 044	188.0	117.5	
	Kurzeme District Court in Ventspils	11	€189 171	129.3	101.6	
	Kurzeme District Court in Talsi	5	€74 475	78.3	78.3	
	Kurzeme District Court in Liepaja	16	€222 597	110.3	110.3	

<sup>74</sup> Data provided by the Court Administration.

<sup>75</sup> Data provided by the Court Administration.

<sup>76</sup> PwC calculation.

Judicial district	Courthouse	Number of judicial posts (2025) <sup>77</sup>	Annual maintenance costs (2023) <sup>78</sup>	Area per judge, m2 <sup>79</sup>	Area to the judge when transferring the place of execution of the office of judges, m2	Recommendation
Latgale Judicial District	Latgale Regional Court	13	€185 917	74.2	74.2	
	Latgale District Court in Ludza	3	€117 021	250.6	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to Rezekne courthouse
	Latgale District Court in Balvi	3	€98 612	213.0	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to Rezekne courthouse
	Latgale District Court in Kraslava	3	€84 017	199.7	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to Daugavpils courthouse
	Latgale District Court in Daugavpils	15	€328 654	183.6	105.9	
	Latgale District Court in Rezekne	9	€161 082	117.8	70.7	
	Latgale District Court in Preiļi	3	€39 298	156.2	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to Daugavpils courthouse
	Latgale District Court in Daugavpils (land registry issues)	5	€45 721	58.4	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to the

<sup>77</sup> Data provided by the Court Administration.

<sup>78</sup> Data provided by the Court Administration.

<sup>79</sup> PwC calculation.

Opportunities of optimization of courthouses of the Latgale judicial district.

Opportunities for optimizing courthouses in Vidzeme Judicial District.

Judicial District	Courthouse	Number of judicial posts (2025) <sup>80</sup>	Annual maintenance costs (2023) <sup>81</sup>	Area per judge, m2 <sup>82</sup>	Area to the judge when transferring the place of execution of the office of judges, m2	Recommendation
Vidzeme Judicial District	Vidzeme Regional Court	10	€264 755	213.8	213.8	
	Vidzeme District Court in Valka	3	€96 665	185.2	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to the Valmiera courthouse
	Vidzeme District Court, Vidzeme District Court in Madona	9 <sup>83</sup>	€288 701	184.5	184.5	
	Vidzeme District Court in Aluksne	4	€114 081	171.3	171.3	
	Vidzeme District Court in Limbaži	4	€105 598	145.7	145.7	
	Vidzeme District Court in Cēsis	9	€222 717	209.2	209.2	
	Vidzeme District Court in Valmiera	9	€190 290	161.3	103.7	
	Vidzeme District Court in Gulbene	4	€68 229	96.1	96.1	

<sup>80</sup> Data provided by the Court Administration.

<sup>81</sup> Data provided by the Court Administration.

<sup>82</sup> PwC calculation.

<sup>83</sup> Six posts in the Vidzeme District Court, three posts in the Madona courthouse of the Vidzeme Regional Court.

\* Although the total number of judicial posts in the courthouse exceeds three, the area of both this courthouse and the courthouse, to which it is recommended to transfer judges, is very large, so there is an opportunity to optimize costs and improve the efficiency of the use of the premises.

Opportunities for optimizing courthouses in Zemgale Judicial District.

Judicial District	Courthouse	Number of judicial posts (2025) <sup>84</sup>	Annual maintenance costs (2023) <sup>85</sup>	Area per judge, m2 <sup>86</sup>	Area to the judge when transferring the place of execution of the office of judges, m2	Recommendation
Zemgale Judicial District	Zemgale Regional Court	9	€206 039	205.1	205.1	
	Zemgale Regional Court in Aizkraukle	6	€48 700	91.9	91.9	
	Zemgale District Court in Jekabpils	8	€443 943	378.7	202.0	
	Zemgale District Court in Dobeles*	5	€153 970	222.7	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to the Jelgava courthouse
	Zemgale District Court in Jelgava	18	€412 177	211.7	146.6	
	Zemgale District Court in Tukums	7	€137 983	153.9	153.9	
	Zemgale District Court in Aizkraukle*	7	€118 292	134.3	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to Jēkabpils courthouse
	Zemgale District Court in Ogre	7	€69 460	94.9	73.8	
	Zemgale District Court in Ogre (land registry issues)	2	€17 823	84.2	-	Close the courthouse, moving the place of execution of the office of judges to the Ogre courthouse

<sup>84</sup> Data provided by the Court Administration.

<sup>85</sup> Data provided by the Court Administration.

<sup>86</sup> PwC calculation.

Judicial District	Courthouse	Number of judicial posts (2025) <sup>84</sup>	Annual maintenance costs (2023) <sup>85</sup>	Area per judge, m2 86	Area to the judge when transferring the place of execution of the office of judges, m2	Recommendation
	Zemgale District Court in Bauska	7	€50 533	71.5	71.5	

Options for optimizing the courthouses of Administrative courts.

Court	Courthouse	Number of judicial posts (2025) <sup>87</sup>	Annual maintenance costs (2023) <sup>88</sup>	Area per judge, m2 <sup>89</sup>	Area to the judge when transferring the place of execution of the office of judges, m2	Recommendation
Administrative Court	Administrative District Court in Liepaja	3	€116 637	215.7	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to the Ventspils courthouse of the Kurzeme District Court
	Administrative District Court in Rezekne; Latgale District Court in Rezekne (land registry issues)	6 <sup>90</sup>	€141 281	101.1	101.1	
	Administrative District Court in Riga; Administrative Regional Court	53 <sup>91</sup>	€436 952	139.3	139.3	
	Administrative District Court in Valmiera	2	€77 331	141.6	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to the Valmiera courthouse of the Vidzeme District Court

<sup>87</sup> Data provided by the Court Administration.

<sup>88</sup> Data provided by the Court Administration.

<sup>89</sup> PwC calculation.

<sup>90</sup> 3 posts at the Administrative District Court in Rezekne, 3 posts at the Latgale District Court in Rezekne (land register issues).

<sup>91</sup> 31 posts in the Administrative District Court, 22 in the Administrative Regional Court.

Administrative District Court in Jelgava	3	€99 071	198.1	-	To close the courthouse, transferring the place of execution of the office of judges to the Jelgava courthouse of the Zemgale District Court
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## 7. Annex. Assessment of the usefulness of maintaining courthouses in points\*\*

	Judicial district	Courthouse	Total points (maximum possible: 27)*
1	Riga Judicial District	Riga Courthouse of the Administrative District Court, Administrative Regional Court	25
2	Riga Judicial District	Riga City Court (Daugavgrīvas Street)	24
3	Riga Judicial District	Riga City Court (Valērijas Seiles Street)	24
4	Kurzeme Judicial District	Kurzeme District Court in Liepāja	23
5	Riga Judicial District	Riga City Court; Criminal Division of the Riga Regional Court (Abrenes Street)	23
6	Zemgale Judicial District	Zemgale District Court in Jelgava	22
7	Riga Judicial District	Riga District Court in Riga	22
8	Zemgale Judicial District	Zemgale Regional Court	22
9	Riga Judicial District	Civil Division of the Riga Regional Court	22
10	Latgale Judicial District	Latgale District Court in Daugavpils	21
11	Riga Judicial District	Riga City Court, Economic Court (Maza Nometņu Street)	21
12	Riga Judicial District	Riga City Court (Jēuzbaznīcas Street)	21
13	Kurzeme Judicial District	Kurzeme District Court in Ventspils	21
14	Latgale Judicial District	Latgale District Court in Rezekne	21
15	Vidzeme Judicial District	Vidzeme Regional Court	21
16	Riga Judicial District	Riga District Court in Sigulda	20
17	Zemgale Judicial District	Zemgale District Court in Ogre	20
18	Riga Judicial District	Riga City Court; Riga District Court (Ieriķu Street)	20
19	Zemgale Judicial District	Zemgale District Court in Tukums	20
20	Vidzeme Judicial District	Vidzeme District Court in Valmiera	20
21	Riga Judicial District	Riga District Court in Jurmala	19
22	Kurzeme Judicial District	Liepāja courthouse of the Administrative District Court	19
23	Zemgale Judicial District	Jelgava Courthouse of the Administrative District Court	19
24	Latgale Judicial District	Latgale Regional Court	19
25	Vidzeme Judicial District	Vidzeme District Court in Cēsis	18
26	Zemgale Judicial District	Zemgale District Court in Aizkraukle	18
27	Vidzeme Judicial District	Valmiera courthouse of the Administrative District Court	17
28	Kurzeme Judicial District	Kurzeme District Court in Talsi	17
29	Kurzeme Judicial District	Kurzeme District Court in Kuldīga	17
30	Kurzeme Judicial District	Kurzeme District Court in Liepāja (land registry issues)	17
31	Kurzeme Judicial District	Kurzeme Regional Court	17
32	Vidzeme Judicial District	Vidzeme District Court in Limbaži	16
33	Zemgale Judicial District	Zemgale District Court in Bauska	16
34	Zemgale Judicial District	Aizkraukle courthouse of the Zemgale Regional Court	16
35	Vidzeme Judicial District	Vidzeme District Court in Madona, Vidzeme Regional Court Madona Courthouse	16
36	Vidzeme Judicial District	Vidzeme District Court in Gulbene	16
37	Latgale Judicial District	Latgale District Court in Daugavpils (land registry issues)	16
38	Latgale Judicial District	Rezekne courthouse of the Administrative District Court, Latgale District Court in Rezekne (land registry issues)	16

	Judicial district	Courthouse	Total points (maximum possible: 27)*
39	Latgale Judicial District	Latgale District Court in Preiļi	15
40	Zemgale Judicial District	Zemgale District Court in Dobeles	15
41	Vidzeme Judicial District	Vidzeme District Court in Alūksne	14
42	Zemgale Judicial District	Zemgale District Court in Jekabpils	14
43	Latgale Judicial District	Latgale District Court in Kraslava	14
44	Zemgale Judicial District	Zemgale District Court in Ogre (land registry issues)	14
45	Vidzeme Judicial District	Vidzeme District Court in Valka	12
46	Latgale Judicial District	Latgale District Court in Balvi	12
47	Latgale Judicial District	Latgale District Court in Ludza	10
48	Kurzeme Judicial District	Kurzeme District Court in Saldus	9

\* The colour formatting reflects the courthouse's assessment of the utility of maintenance: green indicates a higher than average rating, while red indicates a lower rating. The colour formatting is assigned based on the distribution of data in the point table, which is available here:



Courthouse  
assessment.xlsx

## 8. Annex. Court building maintenance efficiency assessment points

Assessment of the economics of the maintenance of courthouses of the Administrative Court in points.

Courthouse	Area to the post of judge, m <sup>2</sup> - points <sup>92</sup>	Maintenance costs for the post of judge in 2023 - points <sup>93</sup>	Number of judicial posts in the courthouse in 2025 - points <sup>94</sup>	The number of court halls for the positions of a judge - points <sup>95</sup>	Population in the city / county in 2025 - points <sup>96</sup>	An additional point if the courthouse is not used solely for the function of land registry issues	An additional point if the courthouse is located in a city of the country	Total points
Jelgava courthouse of the Administrative District Court	3	3	1	5	5	1	1	19
Liepaja courthouse of the Administrative District Court	3	3	1	5	5	1	1	19
Rezekne courthouse of the Administrative District Court <sup>97</sup>	3	4	2	2	3	1	1	16
Riga Courthouse of the Administrative District Court; Administrative Regional Court	5	5	5	3	5	1	1	25
Valmiera courthouse of the Administrative District Court	5	3	1	3	3	1	1	17

<sup>92</sup> Assessment of the area of premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the area per post of judge is close to the optimal (144 m<sup>2</sup>). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large area

<sup>93</sup> Assessment of the cost of maintaining premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the cost of maintaining one post of judges is the lowest.

<sup>94</sup> Rating of the number of judicial posts (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses with the highest number of judicial posts in the courthouse. A higher number of judges may indicate a higher capacity of the judiciary, including the development of the specialisation of judges, and the possibility of more economical use of the courts' budgetary resources.

<sup>95</sup> Assessment of the number of courtrooms per judge's position (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the number of courtrooms per judge is close to optimal (0.7). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large provision of space.

<sup>96</sup> Population impact assessment of the administrative area where the courthouse is located (5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses located in cities/counties/regions with a larger population, as this is due to a higher demand for court services. "1." "3."

<sup>97</sup> The building also houses the Latgale District Court in Rezekne (land register issues)

Assessment of the economy of the maintenance of courthouses of the Kurzeme Judicial District in points.

Courthouse	Number of judicial posts in the courthouse in 2025 - points <sup>98</sup>	Maintenance costs for the post of judge in 2023 - points <sup>99</sup>	Area to the post of judge, m <sup>2</sup> . points <sup>100</sup>	The number of court halls for the positions of a judge - points <sup>101</sup>	Population in the city / county in 2025 - points <sup>102</sup>	An additional point if the courthouse is not used solely for the function of land registry issues	An additional point if the courthouse is located in a city of the country	Total points
Kurzeme Regional Court	3	3	1	3	5	1	1	17
Kurzeme District Court in Kuldiga	2	4	3	5	2	1	0	17
Kurzeme District Court in Liepaja	4	4	4	4	5	1	1	23
Kurzeme District Court in Liepaja (land register issues)	2	4	4	1	5	0	1	17
Kurzeme District Court in Saldus	1	3	1	1	2	1	0	9
Kurzeme District Court in Talsi	2	4	3	5	2	1	0	17
Kurzeme District Court in Ventspils	3	4	4	5	3	1	1	21

<sup>98</sup> Rating of the number of judicial posts (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses with the highest number of judicial posts in the courthouse. A higher number of judges may indicate a higher capacity of the judiciary, including the development of the specialisation of judges, and the possibility of more economical use of the courts' budgetary resources.

<sup>99</sup> Assessment of the cost of maintaining premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the cost of maintaining one post of judges is the lowest.

<sup>100</sup> Assessment of the area of premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the area per post of judge is close to the optimal (144 m<sup>2</sup>). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large area

<sup>101</sup> Assessment of the number of courtrooms per judge's position (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the number of courtrooms per judge is close to optimal (0.7). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large provision of space.

<sup>102</sup> Population impact assessment of the administrative area where the courthouse is located (5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses located in cities/counties/regions with a larger population, as this is due to a higher demand for court services. "1." "3."

Assessment of the economy of the maintenance of courthouses of the Latgale Judicial District in points.

Courthouse	Number of judicial posts in the courthouse in 2025 - points <sup>103</sup>	Maintenance costs for the post of judge in 2023 - points <sup>104</sup>	Area to the post of judge, m2 <sup>105</sup>	The number of court halls for the positions of a judge - points <sup>106</sup>	Population in the city / county in 2025 - points <sup>107</sup>	An additional point if the courthouse is not used solely for the function of land registry issues	An additional point if the courthouse is located in a city of the country	Total points
Latgale Regional Court	3	4	3	2	5	1	1	19
Latgale District Court in Balvi	1	3	3	3	1	1	0	12
Latgale District Court in Daugavpils	4	4	3	3	5	1	1	21
Latgale District Court in Daugavpils (land register issues)	2	5	2	1	5	0	1	16
Latgale District Court in Kraslava	1	3	3	5	1	1	0	14
Latgale District Court in Ludza	1	3	1	3	1	1	0	10
Latgale District Court in Preiļi	1	5	5	1	2	1	0	15

<sup>103</sup> Rating of the number of judicial posts (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses with the highest number of judicial posts in the courthouse. A higher number of judges may indicate a higher capacity of the judiciary, including the development of the specialisation of judges, and the possibility of more economical use of the courts' budgetary resources.

<sup>104</sup> Assessment of the cost of maintaining premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the cost of maintaining one post of judges is the lowest.

<sup>105</sup> Assessment of the area of premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the area per post of judge is close to the optimal (144 m2). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large area

<sup>106</sup> Assessment of the number of courtrooms per judge's position (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the number of courtrooms per judge is close to optimal (0.7). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large provision of space.

<sup>107</sup> Population impact assessment of the administrative area where the courthouse is located (5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses located in cities/counties/regions with a larger population, as this is due to a higher demand for court services. "1." "3."

Latgale District Court in Rezekne	3	4	4	5	3	1	1	21
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Assessment of the economics of the maintenance of courthouses of the Riga Judicial District in points.

Courthouse	Number of judicial posts in the courthouse in 2025 - points <sup>108</sup>	Maintenance costs for the post of judge in 2023 - points <sup>109</sup>	Area to the post of judge, m <sup>2</sup> -points <sub>110</sub>	The number of court halls for the positions of a judge - points <sup>111</sup>	Population in the city / county in 2025 - points <sup>112</sup>	An additional point if the courthouse is not used solely for the function of land registry issues	An additional point if the courthouse is located in a city of the country	Total points
Civil Division of the Riga Regional Court	5	4	4	2	5	1	1	22
Riga City Court (Daugavgrivas Street)	4	4	4	5	5	1	1	24
Riga City Court (Valeria Seiles Street)	4	4	4	5	5	1	1	24
Riga City Court (Iezusbaznīcas Street)	3	2	4	5	5	1	1	21
Riga City Court, Court of Economic Affairs (Maza Nometņu iela)	4	4	3	3	5	1	1	21
Riga City Court; Riga Regional Court Criminal Division (Abrenes Street)	5	4	5	2	5	1	1	23
Riga City Court; Riga District Court (Ieriķu Street)	4	5	4	1	5	0	1	20
Riga District Court in Jurmala	3	1	3	5	5	1	1	19

<sup>108</sup> Rating of the number of judicial posts (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses with the highest number of judicial posts in the courthouse. A higher number of judges may indicate a higher capacity of the judiciary, including the development of the specialisation of judges, and the possibility of more economical use of the courts' budgetary resources.

<sup>109</sup> Assessment of the cost of maintaining premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the cost of maintaining one post of judges is the lowest.

<sup>110</sup> Assessment of the area of premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the area per post of judge is close to the optimal (144 m<sup>2</sup>). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large area

<sup>111</sup> Assessment of the number of courtrooms per judge's position (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the number of courtrooms per judge is close to optimal (0.7). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large provision of space.

<sup>112</sup> Population impact assessment of the administrative area where the courthouse is located (5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses located in cities/counties/regions with a larger population, as this is due to a higher demand for court services. "1." "3."

Riga District Court in Riga	3	4	3	5	5	1	1	22
Riga District Court in Sigulda	2	4	3	5	5	1	0	20

Assessment of the economy of the maintenance of courthouses of the Vidzeme Judicial District in points.

Courthouse	Number of judicial posts in the courthouse in 2025 - points <sup>113</sup>	Maintenance costs for the post of judge in 2023 - points <sup>114</sup>	Area to the post of judge, m <sup>2</sup> - points <sup>115</sup>	The number of court halls for the positions of a judge - points <sup>116</sup>	Population in the city / county in 2025 - points <sup>117</sup>	An additional point if the courthouse is not used solely for the function of land registry issues	An additional point if the courthouse is located in a city of the country	Total points
Vidzeme Regional Court	3	3	3	5	5	1	1	21
Vidzeme District Court in Aluksne	2	3	4	3	1	1	0	14
Vidzeme District Court in Cēsis	3	4	3	4	3	1	0	18
Vidzeme District Court in Gulbene	2	4	3	5	1	1	0	16
Vidzeme District Court in Limbaži	2	3	5	3	2	1	0	16
Vidzeme District Court in Madona, Vidzeme Regional Court Madona Courthouse	3	3	3	4	2	1	0	16
Vidzeme District Court in Valka	1	3	3	3	1	1	0	12

<sup>113</sup> Rating of the number of judicial posts (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses with the highest number of judicial posts in the courthouse. A higher number of judges may indicate a higher capacity of the judiciary, including the development of the specialisation of judges, and the possibility of more economical use of the courts' budgetary resources.

<sup>114</sup> Assessment of the cost of maintaining premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the cost of maintaining one post of judges is the lowest.

<sup>115</sup> Assessment of the area of premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the area per post of judge is close to the optimal (144 m<sup>2</sup>). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large area

<sup>116</sup> Assessment of the number of courtrooms per judge's position (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the number of courtrooms per judge is close to optimal (0.7). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large provision of space.

<sup>117</sup> Population impact assessment of the administrative area where the courthouse is located (5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses located in cities/counties/regions with a larger population, as this is due to a higher demand for court services. "1." "3."

Vidzeme District Court in Valmiera	3	4	4	4	3	1	1	20
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Assessment of the economy of the maintenance of courthouses of the Zemgale Judicial District in points.

Courthouse	Number of judicial posts in the courthouse in 2025 - points <sup>118</sup>	Maintenance costs for the post of judge in 2023 - points <sup>119</sup>	Area to the post of judge, m <sup>2</sup> . points <sup>120</sup>	The number of court halls for the positions of a judge - points <sup>121</sup>	Population in the city / county in 2025 - points <sup>122</sup>	An additional point if the courthouse is not used solely for the function of land registry issues	An additional point if the courthouse is located in a city of the country	Total points
Zemgale Regional Court	3	4	3	5	5	1	1	22
Zemgale Regional Court Aizkraukle Courthouse	2	5	3	3	2	1	0	16
Zemgale District Court in Aizkraukle	2	4	5	4	2	1	0	18
Zemgale District Court in Bauska	2	5	2	4	2	1	0	16
Zemgale District Court in Dobeles	2	3	2	5	2	1	0	15
Zemgale District Court in Jekabpils	3	1	1	5	2	1	1	14
Zemgale District Court in Jelgava	4	4	3	4	5	1	1	22
Zemgale District Court in Ogre	2	5	3	5	3	1	1	20
Zemgale District Court in Ogre (land register issues)	1	5	3	1	3	0	1	14
Zemgale District Court in Tukums	2	4	5	5	3	1	0	20

<sup>118</sup> Rating of the number of judicial posts (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses with the highest number of judicial posts in the courthouse. A higher number of judges may indicate a higher capacity of the judiciary, including the development of the specialisation of judges, and the possibility of more economical use of the courts' budgetary resources.

<sup>119</sup> Assessment of the cost of maintaining premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the cost of maintaining one post of judges is the lowest.

<sup>120</sup> Assessment of the area of premises per post of judge (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the area per post of judge is close to the optimal (144 m<sup>2</sup>). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large area

<sup>121</sup> Assessment of the number of courtrooms per judge's position (1 - 5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses, where the number of courtrooms per judge is close to optimal (0.7). Deviations from the optimal area reduce the number of points, as may indicate an insufficient or unnecessarily large provision of space.

<sup>122</sup> Population impact assessment of the administrative area where the courthouse is located (5 points) – where "5 points" are awarded to courthouses located in cities/counties/regions with a larger population, as this is due to a higher demand for court services. "1." "3."



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