



# Report to Parliament

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**This report is prepared pursuant to Art. 5(3) of Law No. 252/2023, which requires the Commission to submit to Parliament, by 31 March each year, a report on its activities during the preceding year, also to be published on the Commission's official website [www.vettingmd.org](http://www.vettingmd.org).**

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## List of Abbreviations and Terms

**APO** – Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office

**CILC** – Center for International Legal Cooperation

**the Commission** – Prosecutor Vetting Commission

**EFOR** – Expert Forum

**EU** – European Union

**GPO** – General Prosecutor’s Office

**Law No. 26/2022** – Law on measures related to the selection of candidates for positions in the self-administration bodies of judges and prosecutors

**Law No. 252/2023** – Law on external evaluation of judges and prosecutors and the amendment of certain legislative acts

**NAC** – National Anticorruption Center

**PCCOCS** – Prosecutor’s Office for Combating Organized Crime and Special Causes

**the Pre-Vetting Commission** – Independent Evaluation Commission for assessing the integrity of candidates for the position of member in the self-administration bodies of judges and prosecutors

**ROP** – Rules of Procedure

**SCJ** – Supreme Court of Justice

**SCP** – Superior Council of Prosecutors

**U.S.** – United States

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Prosecutor Vetting Commission (hereinafter, the “the Commission”), established under Law No. 252/2023, is mandated to conduct a one-time evaluation of ethical and financial integrity of prosecutorial leadership positions within the General Prosecutor’s Office (GPO) and prosecutor’s offices, and prosecutors of specialized prosecutor’s offices. The Commission also evaluates candidates who, by 31 August 2026, win competitions for positions in specialized prosecutor’s offices, as well as managerial positions within the Prosecutor General’s Office or other prosecutor’s offices. Its mission is grounded in ensuring transparency, accountability, and public trust within Moldova’s prosecution system. The conduct of these evaluations was the principle focus of the Commission during the most recent reporting period, ending 31 March 2026.

We note that the Commission’s concurrent obligations, under Law No. 26/2022, to conduct ethical and financial evaluation of candidates for the self-administration bodies of prosecutors (the Superior Council of Prosecutors (SCP)’s Selection and Evaluation Board and the Discipline and Ethics Board), were completed in 2024, and reported on to Parliament in our previous report of 31 March 2025.

The Commission has, to date, received from the SCP the names of 158 prosecutors subject to evaluation under Law No. 252/2023. This list consists of 67 subjects from the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office (APO), 78 subjects from the Prosecutor’s Office for Combating Organized Crime and Special Causes (PCCOCS), and 13 subjects from the General Prosecutor’s Office. Of the 158 subjects, 27 resigned within the statutory deadline of 20 days, and one prosecutor is a fugitive from justice and cannot be located. To date, the Commission has concluded 27 of the evaluations of the remaining subjects, leaving 103 subjects under current evaluation and four subjects returned by SCP for re-evaluations. Out of the 27 concluded evaluations, three resulted in Commission decisions to discontinue evaluation procedures on the grounds that the respective subjects had previously undergone external evaluation under Law No. 26/2022 or Law No. 65/2023. Of the remaining 24 evaluations, 19 of the Commission’s evaluation reports recommend that the subjects pass the evaluation, and five reports recommend failure. One report is currently under review by the SCP.

During the reporting period, the Commission faced significant operational challenges, primarily due to limited Secretariat capacity. All Secretariat staff had been terminated in January 2025 by the former development partner, causing a temporary suspension of activities and delaying hearings for the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office by approximately six months. The reconstitution began when a new partnership was established with the European Union (EU) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands as donors, and the Dutch nongovernmental organization, Center for International Legal Cooperation (CILC), as implementor.

The Commission operated with six members (three national and three international) during the first part of the reporting period. This number was increased by Parliament to nine members (four national and five international) in July 2025. However, for most of the remaining reporting period, the Commission functioned without the participation of the fifth international member, because he was unable to assume his mandate. Despite these challenges, the Commission and implementing partner continued to strengthen Secretariat capacity, maintain operational processes, and ensure the effective continuation of evaluations.

Many other factors complicated the evaluation process. These included incomplete or delayed document submission by evaluation subjects, limited cooperation of private individuals/entities, the procedural complexities faced in verifying ethical and financial integrity across multiple years and jurisdictions, and the limited jurisprudence from the Supreme Court of Justice (SCJ) under Law No. 252/2023, requiring cautious legal interpretation. The sheer volume of documents to be reviewed remained overwhelming.

## **MANDATE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

The Commission was established under Law No. 252/2023 of the Republic of Moldova on the external evaluation of judges and prosecutors and the amendment of certain legislative acts (“Law No. 252/2023”). Its main purpose is to conduct a one-time evaluation of the ethical and financial integrity of prosecutorial leadership positions within the General Prosecutor’s Office, prosecutors of specialized prosecutor’s offices, and the leadership of regional prosecutor’s offices, in accordance with art. 3 of Law No. 252/2023.

In addition, the Commission is also responsible for carrying out ethical and financial integrity evaluation of candidates for membership in the self-administration bodies of prosecutors, such as candidates for the SCP’s Selection and Evaluation Board and the Discipline and Ethics Board, under art. 2 of Law No. 26/2022 on measures related to the selection of candidates for the positions of members in the self-administration bodies of judges and prosecutors (“Law No. 26/2023”). Because most of the Commission’s work in implementing Law No. 26/2022 was conducted and finished in 2024, while SCJ decisions on those that were appealed were issued in 2025, that work is reviewed in the Annex to this Report, rather than in the text of this report.

The Commission conducts its work in full compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, Law No. 252/2023, and other applicable legal acts, guided by the principles of independence, fairness, and transparency. In carrying out their duties, Commission members act with integrity, impartiality, objectivity, professionalism, and respect for human rights, remaining fully independent in their decisions and free from any influence by individuals, public authorities, organizations, political groups, or development partners that nominated them.

## **CURRENT COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION**

The Commission is currently composed of nine members, appointed by Parliament. Four are citizens of the Republic of Moldova, nominated by parliamentary factions in proportion to the representation of the majority and opposition. The other five are international members nominated by the development partners of the Republic of Moldova.

We note that the Commission had only six members at the outset of this reporting period (three national and three international). On 10 July 2025, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova amended Law No. 252/2023 to provide for the appointment of three additional members (one national and two international) to the Prosecutor Vetting Commission, thereby increasing the number of Commission members from six to nine. As a result, Parliament subsequently appointed one national member and two international members on 10 July 2025.



The Commission currently includes the following members:

<p><b>Christopher Lehmann (Ireland)</b></p> <p>Chairperson of the Commission, was appointed by Parliament on 26 October 2023. He is a former career prosecutor with the U.S. Department of Justice, where he held senior positions in New York and Washington.</p>	<p><b>Virginia Moraru (Republic of Moldova)</b></p> <p>Vice-Chairperson of the Commission was appointed on 30 May 2024. She previously worked as Senior Legal Adviser in the Secretariat of the Commission and as Senior Legal Analyst in the Secretariat of the Pre-Vetting Commission. Between 2008-2022 she served as an anti-corruption officer in the Corruption Prevention Directorate of the NAC.</p>	<p><b>Irmantas Mikelsonis (Lithuania)</b></p> <p>Appointed on 26 October 2023, he is acting Deputy Chief Prosecutor of Organized Crime and Corruption Investigation Department of the General Prosecutor's Office of Lithuania and Assistant to the National Member for Lithuania at Eurojust and Eurojust national correspondent for terrorism matters.</p>
<p><b>Saskia de Vries (Netherlands)</b></p> <p>Was appointed by Parliament on 26 October 2023. She is a retired senior prosecutor from the Netherlands, where she led organized crime and corruption cases for over 20 years.</p>	<p><b>Cornel Lebedinschi (Republic of Moldova)</b></p> <p>Appointed on 24 November 2023, he is an expert in banking anti-fraud. Previously, he acted as a State Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the field of fighting crime and ensuring public order.</p>	<p><b>Nadejda Hriptievschi (Republic of Moldova)</b></p> <p>Appointed on 1 February 2024. She is a lawyer with over 20 years of experience on rule of law, access to justice, equality and non-discrimination. Between April 2022 and November 2025, she was a member of the Pre-Vetting Commission.</p>
<p><b>Ion Graur (Republic of Moldova)</b></p> <p>Was appointed as a member of the Commission on 10 July 2025. He is a Moldovan lawyer and legal expert with 20 years of experience in the rule of law and human rights.</p>	<p><b>Laura Ștefan (Romania)</b></p> <p>Appointed on 10 July 2025, she is a policy expert with 25 years of experience in justice reform, anti-corruption, and Romanian and EU public sector integrity. She is one of the founders and the Executive Director of Expert Forum (EFOR), served as Chairperson of the Regional Anticorruption Initiative (2019-2023), and as member of the Independent Anti-Corruption Advisory Committee in Moldova (2021-2025).</p>	<p><b>Herman von Hebel (Netherlands)</b></p> <p>Appointed on 6 March 2026, he is a Dutch jurist with over 30 years of experience in international justice and judicial governance. Previously served as Chairperson of the Pre-Vetting Commission. He is a judge at the Court of Appeal Den Bosch, the Netherlands. Previously, held senior leadership roles as Registrar of the International Criminal Court in the Hague.</p>

One of the appointed international members, Pierangelo Padova of Italy, was unable to assume his mandate and fulfill his duties due to the failure to receive the necessary approval for this role from the Italian Council of Magistrates. He subsequently resigned from the Commission on 5 February 2026 (with Parliament approving his resignation). He was replaced by Herman von Hebel by Parliament on 6 March 2026. As a result, the Commission operated with less than a full complement of Commissioners – and therefore only two panels instead of the envisioned three – for almost all the reporting period, a situation which posed challenges for the Commission’s work.

We note that Commission Member Saskia de Vries will conclude her service on the Commission as of 30 April 2026, having resigned due to personal reasons. Her resignation request was approved by Parliament on 26 February 2026. Thereafter, Parliament appointed a replacement member, Bernard Lavigne (France) on 6 March 2026. He will begin work with the Commission as of 1 May 2026. He is a French magistrate with over 40 years of experience in criminal justice, including 33 years as a judge and prosecutor at first instance and appellate levels in France, and has served as Chief Public Prosecutor and Deputy General Prosecutor.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE COMMISSION’S WORK IN 2025. EVALUATIONS UNDER LAW NO. 252/2023**

### **Subjects of the Evaluation**

Art. 3 of Law No. 252/2023 defines the categories of persons subject to external evaluation. Pursuant to art. 3 para. (1) of Law No. 252/2023, the Commission evaluates prosecutors who, from 1 January 2017 until 22 August 2023, exercised the function of Prosecutor General, Deputy Prosecutor General, or Head of Sections within the General Prosecutor’s Office, including those who occupied or performed these functions in an acting capacity for a period exceeding one year. Prosecutors within specialized prosecution offices (APO and PCCOCS), including those delegated to such offices for a period exceeding one year between 1 January 2017 and 22 August 2023, also fall within the scope of evaluation.

Finally, the evaluation also covers prosecutors who, during the same reference period, exercised the function of Chief Prosecutor of a prosecution office or Deputy Chief Prosecutor of a prosecution office, including those who held or performed these functions in an acting capacity for more than one year. Law No. 252/2023 further provides that prosecutors falling within the above categories who are suspended from office remain subject to evaluation.

In addition to incumbents, art. 3 of Law No. 252/2023 extends the scope of evaluation to certain candidates for positions in the prosecution offices. This includes candidates who, until 31 August 2026, shall win competitions for positions within specialized prosecution offices. Furthermore, up to two candidates for the positions of Prosecutor General, Deputy Prosecutor General, Chief Prosecutor, or Deputy Chief Prosecutor who obtain the highest scores in competitions held until 31 August 2026, are also subject to evaluation.

By defining these categories, Law No. 252/2023 focuses on positions of heightened institutional responsibility, managerial authority, or specialization within the prosecution system. The scope of subjects reflects the legislator's intention to subject leadership and strategically significant prosecutorial positions to enhanced integrity scrutiny, while ensuring continuity of the evaluation mechanism for newly appointed candidates within the statutory timeframe.

## Evaluation Criteria

Under Law No. 252/2023 on External Evaluation of Judges and Prosecutors, Art. 11, the Commission assesses the subject's compliance with the criteria of ethical integrity and financial integrity.

### Ethical Integrity

Pursuant to Art. 11(2), a subject shall be deemed not to meet the requirements of ethical integrity if the Commission establishes that:

- within the last five years, the subject committed serious violations of the rules of ethics and professional conduct applicable to prosecutors;
- within the last ten years, the subject acted arbitrarily or issued arbitrary acts contrary to imperative legal norms, in circumstances where the European Court of Human Rights had, prior to the issuance of such acts, established that similar decisions were contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights;
- within the last ten years, the subject admitted incompatibilities or conflicts of interest affecting the proper exercise of their office.

Pursuant to Art. 11(6), the assessment is carried out in accordance with the legal provisions in force at the time the relevant acts occurred. Findings of other competent bodies do not have predetermined evidentiary value. Final court judgments are taken into account, except where they would be considered arbitrary or manifestly unreasonable. The Commission assesses only compliance with ethical and professional conduct rules and does not examine the legality of the underlying decisions.

### Financial Integrity

Pursuant to Art. 11(3), a subject shall be deemed not to meet the criterion of financial integrity where the Commission has serious doubts, where:

- the discrepancy between assets, expenses, and income over the last 12 years exceeds 20 average salaries per economy, in the amount as set by the Government for the year 2023
- within the last ten years, the subject committed tax irregularities resulting in unpaid taxes exceeding five average salaries per economy, in the amount as set by the Government for the year 2023.

For 2023, the average monthly salary per economy was 11,700 MDL. Thus, the threshold of 20 average salaries is 234,000 MDL, and the threshold of five average salaries is 58,500 MDL.

Pursuant to Art. 11(4), the Commission may verify, inter alia, the payment of taxes, compliance with the legal regime on the declaration of assets and personal interests, and the sources of the subject's wealth. Pursuant to Art. 11(5), the assessment shall also take into account the assets, expenses, and income of close persons, as defined in Law No. 133/2016 on the declaration of assets and personal interests, as well as persons referred to in Art. 33(4) and (5) of Law No. 132/2016 on the National Integrity Authority.

## Evaluation Process Stages

Evaluating the financial and ethical integrity of prosecutors is a complex and multi-stage process. Each case requires collection, verification, and analysis of information from a variety of sources. Much of this work takes place before the public stages of the procedure and involves extensive documentation and repeated clarification of factual issues. Under Law No. 252/2023, evaluations are generally conducted by evaluation panels composed of three members of the Commission.



The evaluation procedure begins when the Commission notifies the prosecutor about the initiation of the external evaluation. At this stage, the panel requests several key documents, including the declaration of assets and personal interests for the last five years, the ethics questionnaire, and a list of close persons who have worked in the judiciary, prosecution, or public service during that period.



Upon receipt of the declarations and questionnaire, the Panel collects information from many sources. This includes information systems maintained by public institutions and authorities, materials received from individuals and public or private entities, including financial institutions, as well as documents and explanations provided by the evaluation subjects themselves. In addition, any person may submit information relevant to the ethical or financial integrity of a prosecutor under evaluation.



A significant part of the evaluation process involves clarifying the information collected. When questions arise or additional details are required, the evaluation panel addresses written questions to the subject of evaluation and requests supporting documents or explanations. These exchanges may take place over several rounds, with the subject providing responses, additional materials, and other evidence aimed at clarifying the identified issues.



After reviewing the available information, the evaluation panel informs the subject in writing of any remaining doubts regarding compliance with the integrity criteria. To this end a detailed document (notice of hearing), outlining the specific concerns of the evaluation panel that were flagged during the evaluation process, is prepared and shared with the subject in advance of a proposed hearing. The subject may request access to the evaluation file, after which the public hearing is scheduled.



During the hearing, the subject has the opportunity to provide further explanations and present additional evidence. Hearings are public, are video-recorded, and are published on the Commission's website. In exceptional cases, certain parts of the hearing may be held in closed sessions to protect public order, privacy, or morality.



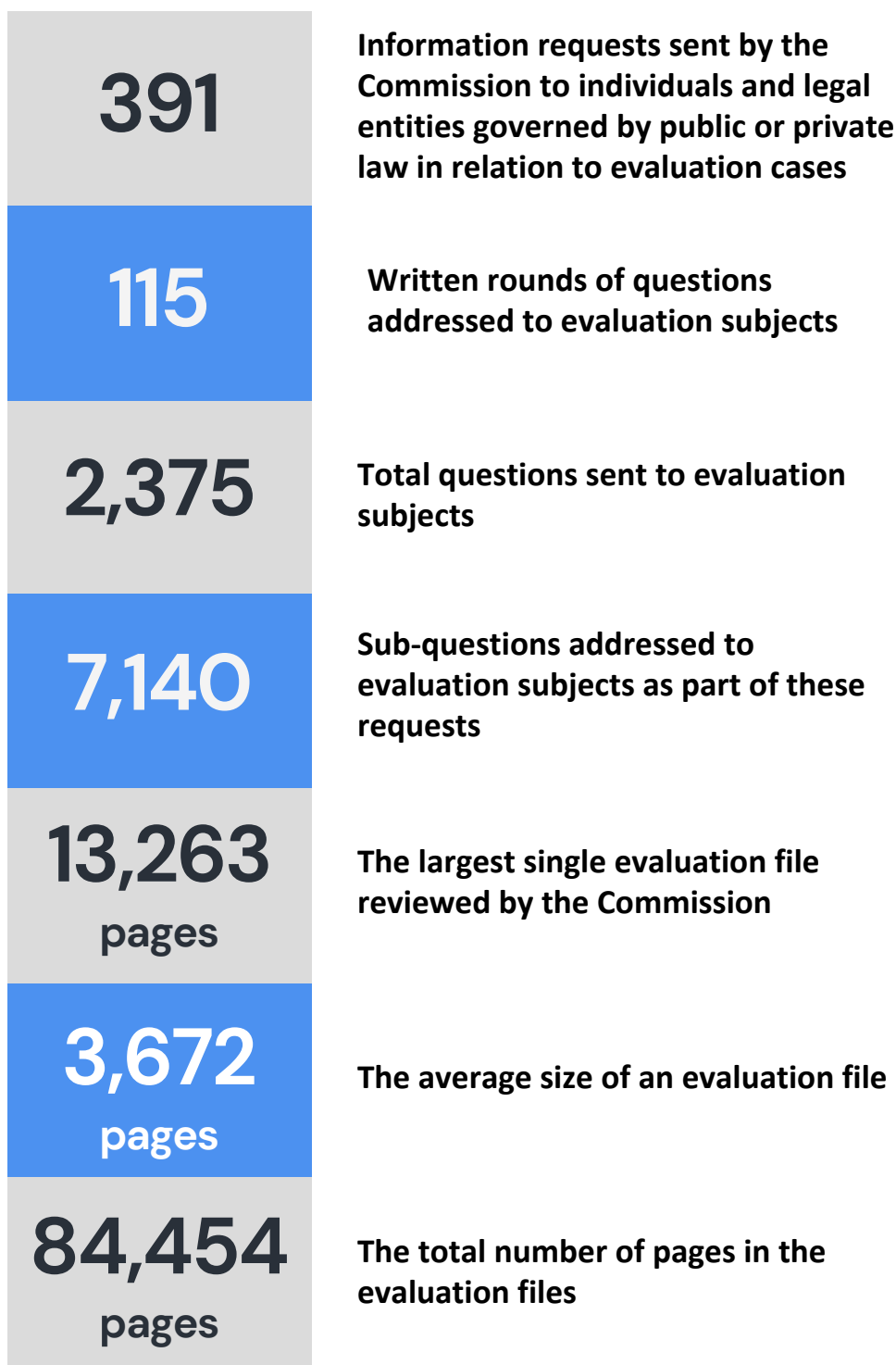
Following the hearing, the evaluation panel prepares a reasoned report setting out the relevant facts and its conclusion as to whether the subject meets the ethical and financial integrity criteria. The report is adopted by unanimous vote of the members of the evaluation panel. Where a panel is unable to reach a unanimous decision, the evaluation is referred to the full Commission for examination.



The report is then submitted to the SCP, which makes the final decision on the outcome of the evaluation. The SCP may either accept the Commission's report or reject it on factual circumstances or procedural errors. In such cases, it may order the evaluation to be resumed. The new assessment is conducted by the panel or, where appropriate, by the Commission.

Between 1 January 2025 and 31 March 2026, the Commission processed a large volume of information requests, written questions addressed to evaluation subjects, and extensive case files containing significant amounts of documentation. The infographic on the next page presents aggregated data reflecting the Commission's workload during the reporting period. The figures illustrate the scale of information collected and reviewed in each evaluation case.

The following figures illustrate the level of detail involved in each evaluation and the substantial volume of information that must be collected, verified, and analyzed before the evaluation panel or Commission can reach a reasoned conclusion.



## Progress of the Evaluation Process

The Commission has, to date, received from the SCP the names of 158 prosecutors subject to evaluation under Law No. 252/2023. In total, 27 out of the 158 prosecutors on the list received by the Commission from the SCP resigned within the legally prescribed 20-day period. Additionally, one prosecutor remains a fugitive from justice, and cannot therefore be evaluated.

The Commission has to date concluded 27 evaluations under Law No. 252/2023. Three of the 27 evaluations carried out by the Commission resulted in Commission decisions to discontinue evaluation procedures on the grounds that the respective subjects had previously undergone external evaluation under Law No. 26/2022 or Law No. 65/2023.



### Notifications by Prosecution Office

OFFICE	Notified	Resigned
Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office	67 <sup>1</sup>	10
Prosecutor's Office for Combating Organized Crime and Special Causes	78 <sup>2</sup>	15
General Prosecutor's Office	13 <sup>3</sup>	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>27</b>

### Performance Rate

<b>19</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
PASSED	FAILED	DISCONTINUED

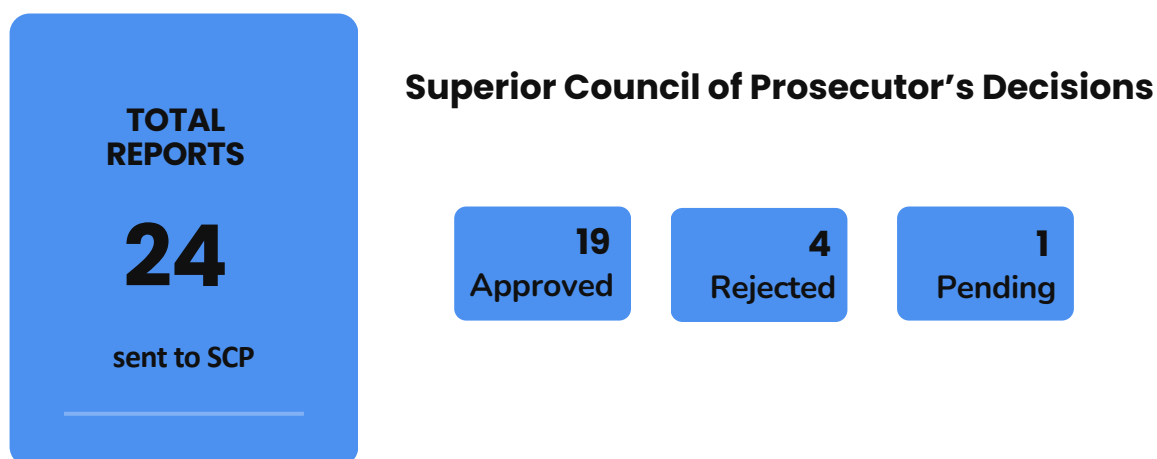
<sup>1</sup>SCP notified the Commission that two prosecutors initially included on the APO list were reassigned to other evaluation lists following changes in their positions. One was selected for a leadership role within PCCOCS and was therefore moved from the APO list to the PCCOCS list. The other was appointed Prosecutor General and was moved from the APO list to the GPO list.

<sup>2</sup>The Commission received from SCP a list of 78 PCCOCS prosecutors, plus one prosecutor moved from APO list.

<sup>3</sup>The Commission received from SCP a list of 12 GPO prosecutors, plus one prosecutor moved from APO list and plus additional the Deputy Prosecutor General.

Of the 24 cases in which the Commission completed the evaluation, the Commission approved 19 evaluation reports recommending that the subjects pass the evaluation under Law No. 252, and five reports recommending failure.

These 24 reports were submitted to the SCP. Four were returned by SCP to the Commission for re-evaluation; one report had proposed that the subject pass the evaluation, while the remaining three had proposed that the subjects fail. Regarding the reports the SCP approved (19 out of 24 subjects), the evaluation procedure has been completed in 18 cases. The evaluation reports concerning these subjects have been published on the Commission's official website, in the section dedicated to evaluation reports.



From the 158 prosecutors subject to evaluation, 107 cases are still under review, including four re-evaluations

It is important to mention that the Commission has not yet begun the evaluation of Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs of District Prosecutor's Offices, a category comprising an estimated total of 72 prosecutors. Given the current resource constraints, it is not feasible to complete their evaluation by 31 December 2026. This limitation has been communicated on multiple occasions to all competent national authorities.

## Main categories of findings

In 22 out of 24 reports approved during the reporting period, the Commission examined aspects of potentially problematic matters, either financial and/or ethical. In one case of the two remaining cases, the Commission issued an evaluation report with the proposal of failing the evaluation on procedural-legal grounds, as the subject had submitted the resignation from the position of prosecutor after the expiry of the statutory deadline established by law. In the other case, the subject did not submit the declarations and ethics questionnaire as required by art. 12 para. 3 of Law No. 252/2023.

The Commission's reports specifically address problematic matters that arise during the evaluation. In 14 cases (58.33%), the Commission report examined both financial integrity aspects and issues related to ethical rules and professional conduct. In 6 cases (25%), the evaluation concerned exclusively financial aspects, while in 3 cases (12.5 %) the evaluation report only ethical or professional conduct issues were examined.



**In 10 cases, the Commission's report identified potential discrepancies suggesting unjustified wealth. However, the amounts identified did not exceed the legal threshold of 234,000 MDL (equivalent to 20 average salaries per economy as established for 2023).**

**Consequently, although such findings required clarification and assessment, they could not constitute grounds for a proposal of non-promotion under art. 11 para. (3) lit. a) of Law No. 252/2023.**

## Appeals under Law No. 252/2023

With regard to reports adopted by the SCP under Law No. 252/2023, only two decisions of the SCP approving evaluation reports were challenged before the SCJ. One case was dismissed, the other is currently pending with the court.

**In the first case**, on 11 July 2024, the Commission concluded that the subject failed the evaluation due to the non-submission of the declaration of assets and personal interests, the declaration on the list of close persons, and the ethics questionnaire, as required under art. 12 para. (3) of Law No. 252/2023. On 1 August 2024, the SCP accepted the Commission's report and formally confirmed that the subject failed the evaluation. On 12 August 2024, the subject challenged the SCP decision before the SCJ, seeking annulment of both the SCP decision and the Commission's report, as well as an order for re-evaluation. The claim was lodged against both the SCP and the Commission. By its final decision of 13 February 2025, the SCJ dismissed the appeal and upheld the contested SCP decision.

**In the second case**, the subject likewise failed the evaluation on procedural grounds, having resigned from office after the expiry of the 20-day statutory deadline provided under Law No. 252/2023 following notification of the initiation of the evaluation. The subject challenged before the SCJ the SCP's decision accepting the evaluation report establishing failure. The case has been registered and partially examined by the SCJ but remains pending with the court. During the proceedings, the subject raised an exception of unconstitutionality concerning certain provisions of Law No. 252/2023. This exception is currently before the Constitutional Court.

## **2025 AMENDMENTS TO LAW NO. 252/2023 & RULES OF PROCEDURE**

### **Amendments to Law No. 252/2023**

During 2025, Law No. 252/2023 underwent several amendments by Parliament. Those that entered into force on 12 June 2025 introduced two changes. First, the number of members of the Commission was increased from six to nine. Second, evaluation subjects were granted the possibility to challenge before the SCP the Commission's refusal to conduct a hearing, or part thereof, in closed session. A separate set of amendments that entered into force on 12 August 2025 extended the statutory deadline for the completion of the evaluation process from 31 December 2025 to 31 December 2026.

### **Amendments to the Commission Rules of Procedure**

Following the amendments adopted by Parliament to Law No. 252/2023, the Commission revised and updated its Rules of Procedure (ROP) during 2025. The ROP were supplemented with clarifications on the effects of passing or failing for subjects who had previously undergone evaluation under Law No. 65/2023 or Law No. 26/2022.

The procedure for file management and case documentation was simplified (art. 27 of the ROP). The time-limit for conducting a hearing after notification was reduced from 20 days to 10 days (art. 28 of the ROP), with the aim of increasing procedural efficiency. The ROP also introduced the possibility of examining additional information following the resumed evaluation, where such information could not be presented earlier for objective reasons (art. 30 of ROP).

The updated version of the ROP, as well as previous versions, are publicly available on the Commission's official website.

## OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

The Prosecutor Vetting Commission's work relies on its Secretariat, composed of highly specialized financial and legal analysts. These staff are essential for reviewing and analyzing large volumes of documents and thousands of pages that underpin the Commission's ethical and financial investigations, including bank statements, financial records, property records, and legal proceedings.

Since its establishment on 1 December 2023, the Commission has faced persistent capacity constraints within its Secretariat. Initial staffing levels were limited, and subsequent recruitment progressed slowly due to mandatory integrity vetting procedures, which significantly reduced the pool of eligible candidates. Recruitment remains structurally challenging, as it is limited to Moldovan nationals and requires both high-level expertise and demonstrated integrity, narrowing the range of suitable applicants.

Operational continuity was further affected in early 2025, when external funding arrangements were abruptly terminated by the previous development partner - the U.S. government, represented by the U.S. Embassy in the Republic of Moldova, and its implementing partners, the GSV Consortium (composed of two grantees, Dexis International and Zemitek) and the International Development Law Organization (IDLO). This led to a suspension of Secretariat staff and an abrupt halt in logistical and operational support, resulting in a six-month delay in the commencement of hearings under Law No. 252/2023.

A new development partner - the Center for International Legal Cooperation, with financial support from the European Union and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands – began to assume responsibility for implementation in March 2025. Between April and June 2025, focused efforts were undertaken to rebuild the Secretariat, restore operational systems, and re-establish the Commission's working capacity.

Although core activities have resumed, the Secretariat continues to face a significant imbalance between workload and available human resources. As of the reporting period, 12 analysts and five legal advisors (including seniors) support nine Commission members. Full operational capacity and the delivery of expected results would require at least 18 analysts and nine legal advisors (two analysts and one legal advisor per Commissioner), plus a senior supervisory analyst and a senior legal advisor. Other support staff are necessary to ensure full operational functioning.

Recruitment efforts have continued throughout the reporting period to strengthen staffing and ensure the effective continuation of evaluations. These staffing challenges mean that the Secretariat size has remained well below full capacity, with the consequent delay in evaluations. Most recently, the current development partner terminated six Secretariat staff, further reducing our staff resources at a critical juncture. Nevertheless, the Commission and implementor will continue to take steps necessary to strengthen Secretariat capacity and operational processes, and to maintain procedural efficiency and legal compliance.

Beyond staffing and operational disruptions, the Commission continues to confront several ongoing challenges in conducting evaluations under Law No. 252/2023:

**1**

### **INFORMATION COLLECTION FROM SUBJECTS**

Evaluation subjects frequently request extensions for submitting required documents, leading to extended review periods. Submitted replies to written questions and required materials are often vague or incomplete, necessitating repeated rounds of questions and supplemental requests for supporting evidence to clarify inconsistencies or doubts.

**2**

### **CONSTRAINED COOPERATION OF PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES**

Persons and entities outside the public sector frequently fail to respond to the Commission's requests, change contact details, or become untraceable, making it difficult to obtain relevant documentation or evidence.

**3**

### **RIGOROUS NATURE OF SECRETARIAT STAFFING**

The specialized staff must undergo stringent integrity and background checks prior to employment, further limiting the pool of candidates with sufficient experience and expertise to support the Commission's complex investigations. New staff must be trained on the specific procedures and practices that underly the evaluation process.

**4**

### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION FROM ABROAD**

There is a continuing inability to obtain any materials from foreign governments and entities outside Moldova, which compromises the full ability to conduct complete and comprehensive evaluations.

# PUBLIC OUTREACH AND TRANSPARENCY

## Communication Objectives and Principles

The Commission communicates on a regular basis to inform the public about the outcomes of the external evaluation of the prosecutors, in accordance with Law No. 252/2023 and Law No. 26/2022. The Commission ensures the transparency of its procedures by providing timely and accurate information about its operations. This enables all interested parties to understand how evaluations are conducted, access their results, and verify that all assessed subjects are treated in a fair and impartial manner.

## Press Releases

During the reporting period, the Commission issued 77 press releases covering the adopted evaluation reports and decisions, the key stages of the assessment process for each subject, clarifications regarding the regulatory framework governing the Commission's work, and institutional announcements. On average, more than four press releases were published per month. Particular attention was paid to the timing of communications, as timely disclosure is essential to transparency. All information was made public as soon as legally permissible, in full compliance with applicable legal requirements. Press releases were distributed to a broad range of media outlets, with the distribution list being regularly reviewed and updated.

## Website and Social Media Communication

The Commission's website (<https://vettingmd.org/>) serves as the primary official information platform, providing regular updates on reports and decisions, amendments to legal framework, as well as access to explanatory materials. It functions as the central reference point for media, stakeholders, and the public, offering structured, reliable, and easily accessible information.

Information published on the Commission's website is also shared through the Commission's official [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) pages, and [YouTube](#) channel to ensure wider reach and easier access. By using social media platforms, the Commission makes key updates readily available to audiences who may not regularly visit the website, while maintaining consistency between official sources. This approach helps broaden public access to information and ensures that important developments are communicated in a timely and accessible manner across multiple platforms.

In addition, the Commission and its members participate in interviews and respond to media questions, in line with the law and its internal rules. This helps ensure that the information reaching the public is accurate, balanced, and trustworthy.

## Record of Public Hearings

Under the law governing the Commission's activity, hearings of evaluation subjects are public and audio and video recorded. Video recordings of public hearings are published on the Commission's website within three days of the hearing date, in the original language - Romanian, and with English translation. The recordings are also uploaded to the Commission's official YouTube channel, with links shared on its Facebook and LinkedIn pages to ensure transparency and public access. As an exception, the Commission may decide to close the entire or part of a hearing if this is necessary to protect public order, privacy, or morality.

## Publication of Evaluation Reports/Decisions

The publication of evaluation reports/decisions is an essential part of the Commission's commitment to transparency and is carried out in full accordance with the law. However, in some cases, the law limits the ability of the Commission to publish evaluation reports or decisions. This was true under Law No. 26/2022, which stated that the Commission cannot publish decisions on evaluated candidates without their consent. This means the public does not always see why a candidate passed or failed. For example, out of 32 candidates evaluated under this law, 16 chose not to make public decisions regarding them. This included both those who passed and those who failed the evaluation.

Under Law No. 252/2023, the evaluation report is first only sent to the evaluated prosecutor and to the SCP within three days of its approval. The evaluation report is published on the Commission's website only after the deadline for challenging the SCP's decision has expired or, where applicable, after a final decision has been issued by the SCJ. Consequently, as required by law, publication takes place significantly later than the announcement of the evaluation outcome.

Though the public is given access to the Commission's evaluation reports/decisions to the extent permitted by law, these limitations on the ability of the Commission to share the results of its work with the public mean that it is not always well understood by the public. This causes confusion or misinterpretation of the Commission's work.

## CONCLUSION

The Commission has made significant progress in establishing its operations and conducting evaluations under Law No. 252/2023, despite the operational challenges, including Secretariat understaffing, the temporary suspension of funding in the winter and spring of 2025, and other circumstances. The Commission has nevertheless successfully issued evaluation reports, upheld by the SCJ, demonstrating robustness and legal compliance of its work.

For 2026, the Commission's priority is the completion of the evaluation, under Law No. 252/2023, of those categories of prosecutors that were previously identified, namely prosecutors from the APO, PCCOCs and GPO components of the prosecution service. The immediate focus will be on finalizing evaluations of prosecutors from APO, followed by significant progress in evaluating prosecutors from PCCOCS and the GPO.

Concurrently, the Commission plans to initiate evaluations of chief prosecutors and deputy chief prosecutors of a prosecution office, including those who held or performed these functions in an acting capacity for more than one year, as part of the broader strategy to complete the evaluation process comprehensively. As noted, however, the Commission will not be able to complete evaluation of all statutory subjects by 31 December 2026.

These objectives underscore the Commission's commitment to ensuring transparency, accountability, and integrity within the prosecution system, while continuing to address operational challenges and maintaining the rigorous standards of ethical and financial assessment established under the applicable legal frameworks.

## ANNEX I - EVALUATIONS UNDER LAW NO. 26/2022

### Subjects of the Evaluation

Law No. 26/2022 establishes the framework for the external evaluation of candidates seeking membership in the self-administration bodies of judges and prosecutors. The purpose of the law is to ensure that individuals appointed to these bodies meet high standards of ethical and financial integrity, given their role in safeguarding the independence, accountability, and proper functioning of the justice system.

Within the mandate of the Prosecutor Vetting Commission, the evaluation concerns candidates for positions within the Discipline and Ethics Board and the Selection and Evaluation Board under the Superior Council of Prosecutors. These bodies exercise key functions related to the professional accountability of prosecutors and the organization of career advancement within the prosecution system.

Under the legal framework established by Law No. 26/2022, candidates participating in the selection procedures for these bodies are subject to an external integrity evaluation before they may assume office. The evaluation is conducted prior to the completion of the selection process and serves as a mandatory safeguard to ensure that only candidates who meet the integrity standards established by law may be appointed.

Through this mechanism, the law introduces an additional layer of scrutiny designed to strengthen public trust in the system of prosecutorial self-governance and to ensure that individuals entrusted with disciplinary oversight and professional evaluation possess the integrity required for such responsibilities.

### Evaluation Criteria

The integrity evaluation conducted under Law No. 26/2022 is based on two main criteria: ethical integrity and financial integrity, as established by Art. 8 of the Law.

Under Art. 8(2), a candidate meets the **ethical integrity** requirement only if they have not committed serious violations of professional conduct, have no reasonable suspicions of corruption, and have complied with all legal obligations relating to the declaration of assets and personal interests, conflicts of interest, incompatibilities, and other related restrictions.

In assessing ethical integrity, the Commission examines the candidate's professional conduct, compliance with ethical standards applicable to prosecutors, and respect for legal obligations designed to ensure transparency and accountability. Situations that may raise doubts regarding ethical integrity include conduct inconsistent with professional duties, failure to comply with declaration requirements, or other actions that undermine confidence in the integrity of the justice system.

**Financial integrity** is assessed under Art. 8(4) of Law No. 26/2022. To satisfy this requirement, the Commission must establish that the candidate’s assets were declared in accordance with the law and that the assets acquired over the last fifteen years correspond to the candidate’s declared income.

The Supreme Court of Justice has clarified the strict nature of this standard. In its jurisprudence reviewing the Commission’s decisions, the Court emphasized that the law requires failure whenever serious doubts arise regarding a candidate’s ethical or financial integrity. The Court further noted that even a relatively small discrepancy between income and expenditures accumulated over a fifteen-year period may justify a failure under Law No. 26/2022 if it remains unexplained.

This approach reflects the preventive character of the evaluation mechanism, which aims to ensure that individuals entrusted with key functions in the governance of the prosecution system demonstrate full transparency and consistency between their financial situation and their declared income.

## Results of the Evaluation Process

Under Law No. 26/2022, the Prosecutor Vetting Commission evaluated 32 candidates for positions within the Discipline and Ethics Board and the Selection and Evaluation Board under the Superior Council of Prosecutors.

Following the evaluation process, 15 candidates passed the evaluation, while 17 candidates did not meet the integrity criteria established by the Law.



Among the negative outcomes, the Commission identified both ethical and financial integrity concerns in nine cases, ethical integrity concerns in three cases, and financial integrity concerns in one case. In addition, three candidates failed the evaluation after withdrawing from the process, while one candidate refused to submit the required five-year asset and interest declaration and the ethical integrity questionnaire, which prevented the Commission from conducting the assessment required by law.

The relatively high failure rate reflects the strict integrity standards established by Law No. 26/2022 and the importance of ensuring that candidates for self-administration bodies meet the highest standards of transparency and professional conduct.

## Main Categories of Findings

During the evaluation process, the Commission examined many factual circumstances that raised doubts regarding candidates' ethical or financial integrity. Only those aspects that reached the level of seriousness required by the legal standard were reflected in the Commission's decisions.

With regard to **ethical integrity**, the Commission identified several categories of conduct that raised serious concerns, including:

- involvement in cases that resulted in judgments against the Republic of Moldova at the European Court of Human Rights;
- purchasing immovable property at preferential prices and failing to declare the income obtained from subsequent transactions;
- declaring artificially low purchase prices for real estate;
- engaging in entrepreneurial activity while exercising the function of prosecutor;
- using revolving credit lines to finance agricultural activities conducted by third parties;
- purchasing, financing, and using a house formally registered in the name of a relative, later described by the candidate as a fictitious arrangement;
- obtaining a construction plot free of charge without a clear legal justification;
- receiving social housing without meeting eligibility criteria;
- using the bank card of a deceased relative.

With regard to **financial integrity**, the Commission identified several categories of financial inconsistencies and unexplained resources, including:

- discrepancies between income and expenditures exceeding 100,000 or even 200,000 lei in a single year;
- unexplained financial resources used for the construction of residential property or the acquisition of movable assets;
- unjustified bank deposits, including deposits amounting to approximately 60,000 EUR;
- alleged loans from close relatives that lacked supporting documentary evidence;
- unexplained financial resources used to acquire vehicles registered in the name of close relatives.

In addition, the Commission identified cases involving **combined ethical and financial concerns**, particularly relating to the failure to properly declare assets and personal interests. These situations included:

- undeclared income from real estate transactions, including income not reported to the State Tax Service;
- substantial undeclared cash savings accumulated over several years;
- undeclared active bank accounts holding deposits of up to 500,000 lei;
- vehicles declared at significantly undervalued prices;
- undeclared real estate owned either domestically or abroad;
- failure to declare the right of habitation in a dwelling owned by a relative in which the candidate and their family resided.

In several cases, such omissions occurred repeatedly over multiple years. In one case, the Commission observed that new declaration omissions appeared even after the evaluation process had already begun.

## **Appeals under Law No. 26/2022**


The decisions of the Commission adopted under Law No. 26/2022 were subject to judicial review before the Supreme Court of Justice.

Eleven candidates who failed the integrity evaluation have challenged the Commission's decisions before the Supreme Court of Justice, and all eleven challenges have been dismissed. As a result, all decisions adopted by the Commission under Law No. 26/2022 have been upheld by the Court.

The consistent confirmation of the Commission's decisions by the Supreme Court of Justice demonstrates the legal robustness of the evaluation process conducted under Law No. 26/2022 and contributes to the development of judicial practice in the field of integrity evaluation.



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